

COMMENTARY ON THE CREED OF AṬ-ṬAḤĀWĪ

BY IBN ABĪ AL -'IZZ

SHARḤ AL -'AQIDAH AT - ṬAḤĀWIYYAH

TRANSLATED BY
MUHAMMAD 'ABDUL-HAQQ ANSARI

KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
Ministry of Higher Education
Al-Imam Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University
Deanery of Academic Research

COMMENTARY ON THE CREED OF AṬ-ṬAḤĀWĪ BY IBN ABĪ AL -'IZZ

SHARH AL -'AQIDAH AT - ṬAḤĀWIYYAH

TRANSLATED BY
MUHAMMAD 'ABDUL-HAQQ ANSARI

AL-IMAM MUHAMMAD IBN SA'UD ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY
IMADAT AL-BAHTH AL-'ILMI
RIYADH, SAUDI ARABIA
INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC AND ARABIC SCIENCES IN AMERICA
1421 A.H.-2000 C.E.

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH
THE COMPASSIONATE THE MERCIFUL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

(30) And he is the seal of the prophets.

Allah has said, "Rather, he is the Messenger of Allah and the seal of the prophets" [33:40]. And the Prophet (peace be on him) himself said, "The similitude of the prophets is that of a palace which is beautiful and perfect except that the place of one brick is vacant. Whoever goes round it is struck by its beauty. However, he wonders why the place of one brick is empty. When I was sent, that empty place was filled and the building became complete. With me the line of the messengers has been sealed" [recorded in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*s of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim].[70]

He also said, "I have many names. I am Muḥammad. I am Aḥmad. I am Al-Maḥī (the Destroyer), as through me Allah will destroy infidelity. And I am Al-Ḥashīr (the Gatherer), as following me people will be raised from the graves and gathered together. And I am Al-'Aqib (the Last), as there will be no prophet after me."[71]

In *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* it is recorded from Thawbān that the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) said, "Among my nation will arise thirty great liars. Each of them will claim that he is a prophet. However, I am the seal of the prophets and there will be no prophet after me."[72] Muslim has also recorded that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Allah has exalted me above all the prophets by favoring me with six things that He did not give to any other prophet: He has enabled me to express many things in few words; He has helped me by casting fear into the hearts of our enemies; He has allowed me the spoils of war; He has permitted me to worship anywhere on the earth and has deemed it pure; He has sent me as His messenger to all mankind; and He has sealed the series of prophets with me."[73]

---

[70] Actually, the wording of the *ḥadīth* as mentioned by the commentator occurs neither in *Ṣaḥīḥ* Al-Bukhārī or *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. Instead it is mentioned by Ibn 'Asakir in *Tārīkh Dimashq* (Madinah: Maktabat ad-Dār, 1407 A.H.) and by As-Suyūṭī in Al-Jāmi' al-Kabīr. However, with a slightly different wording, the *ḥadīth* may be found in Al-Bukhārī, 3535; Muslim, 2286; and Aḥmad, 2:256, 312, 398, 412. All of these *aḥādīth* are narrated by Abū Hurayrah. Similar *aḥādīth* reported by other Companions may be found in Al-Bukhārī, 3534; Muslim, 2297; At-Tirmidhī, 2613; Aḥmad, 3:361 and 5:137.

[71] Al-Bukhārī, 3532, 4896; Muslim, *Al-Faḍā'il*, 2354; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Adab*, 2842; Ad-Dārimī, 2:317, 318; Aḥmad, 4:81, 84.

[72] This is part of a *ḥadīth* in Abū Dāwūd, *Al-Fitan wa al-Malaḥīm*, 4252; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Fitan*, 2220; Aḥmad, 5:278. The commentator stated that it is from *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* but this is not correct. However, there are *aḥādīth* in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* with the same meaning. See Muslim, *Al-Imārah*, 1920 and *Al-Fitan* 2889.

[73] Muslim, 523; At-Tirmidhī, 1553; Aḥmad, 2:411, 412.

(31) He is Leader (imām) of the Pious.

An imām is one whose example is followed. The Prophet (peace be on him) was sent as an example to be followed. As Allah has said, "Say (Muḥammad): If you truly love Allah, then follow me and Allah will love you" [3:31]. Whoever follows him and obeys him is one of the pious.

(32) He is Chief of the Messengers.

The Prophet said, "I will be leading the children of Adam on the Day of Resurrection. I will be the first to rise from the grave. I will be the first to intercede and the first whose request will be granted."[74] This *ḥadīth* was recorded by Muslim. The words that occur in the *ḥadīth* concerning intercession are, "I will be the leader of all mankind on the Day of Judgment."[75] Muslim and At-Tirmidhī recorded, on the authority of Wāthilah Ibn Al-Asqa, that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Allah chose the people of Kinānah from among the children of Ismā'īl, and the Quraysh from among the Kinānah, and Banū Hāshīm from among the Quraysh. And me he chose from Banū Hāshīm."[76]

One might say that this statement is not consistent with the *ḥadīth* recorded by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim in which the Prophet said, "Do not exalt me above Moses. On the Day of Judgment, when everyone will be unconscious, I will be the first to regain consciousness. And lo and behold, Moses will be holding a side of the Throne. I will not know whether he gained consciousness before me or was exempted by Allah from falling unconscious."[77] How can one reconcile this *ḥadīth* with the *ḥadīth* that states, "I am the leader of all the children of Adam. However, this is not boasting."[78]

The response to this is that the Prophet (peace be on him) made the former statement for a particular reason. A Jew once said to a

---

[74]Muslim, *Al-Faḍā'il*, 2278; Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4673; Aḥmad, 2:540.

[75]Part of a long *ḥadīth* on intercession referred to earlier. See Al-Bukhārī, *Al-Anbiyā'*, 3340, 3361; Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 194; At-Tirmidhī, *Ṣifat al-Qiyāmah*, 2436; Aḥmad, 2:435, 436.

[76]Muslim, *Al-Faḍā'il*, 2276; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Manāqib*, 3612; Aḥmad, 4:107.

[77]Al-Bukhārī, 2411, 3408, 6517, 6518, 7428; Muslim, *Al-Faḍā'il*, 2373; Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4671; Aḥmad, 2:264.

[78]At-Tirmidhī, *Az-Zuhd*, 3618; Ibn Mājah, *Az-Zuhd*, 4308; Aḥmad, 3:2 and 1:281, 282, 295, 296.

Muslim, "No, and I swear by the One Who chose Moses over mankind." The Companion got upset and slapped the Jew, saying, "You dare say that while the Prophet is among us!" The Jew went to the Prophet (peace be on him) and complained about the Muslim who had slapped him. Then the Prophet (peace be on him) made the above statement. In fact, if the Prophet (peace be on him) is exalted out of some sectarian bias or caprice, it is blameworthy. Even *jihād* is ruined if someone fights for the sake of partisanship. Certainly Allah has forbidden boasting. But Allah has also said, "We have exalted some prophets over others" [17:55], and, "These messengers We endowed with gifts some above the others: to one of them Allah spoke, others He raised to degrees of honor" [9:253]. This means that what is blameworthy is to prefer one in the manner of boasting, in the sense of demeaning the others. This is how the *ḥadīth*, "Do not exalt one prophet over another," is to be understood,[79] if that *ḥadīth* is confirmed, as it is mentioned in the same *ḥadīth* as the *ḥadīth* concerning Moses and is contained in Al-Bukhārī and elsewhere. But some say that there is a defect in this *ḥadīth*, as opposed to the *ḥadīth* of Moses, which is authentic, without any defect, according to the consensus.[80]

Some people have given a different reply. They say that the meaning of the *ḥadīth*, "Do not exalt me above Moses," or "Do not exalt one prophet above another," is that one should not exalt one particular prophet over another. However, there is nothing wrong in making a general statement without referring to a particular person, such as, "I am the leader of all the children of Adam. However, it is not boasting." Since the *ḥadīth* refers to the greatness of the Prophet in general terms, there is nothing wrong in it. If you say that X is the best of all the people in the city, you are not comparing him with any particular person and, as such, there is nothing wrong in it. But it is completely different when you say X is better than Y. It is better to avoid such specific references. This is the answer given by Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī in his *Sharḥ Ma'ānī al-Āthār*.[81]

---

[79]Al-Bukhārī, 3414; Muslim, *Al-Faḍā'il*, 2373. With a slightly different wording, the *ḥadīth* is also found in Muslim, 2374; Aḥmad, 3:33; Abū Dāwūd, 6668; and Al-Bukhārī, 4638, 6912, 6917, 7427.

[80]This is a strange statement by the Commentator, as none of the scholars of *ḥadīth*, including Ibn Hajr and others, have pointed out any defect in the *ḥadīth*.

[81]Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī, *Sharḥ Ma'anī al-Āthār*, ed. by Muḥammad Zuhrī An-Najjār (Beirut: Dār Al-Kutub al-'Ilmīyyah, 1399/1979), first edition, vol. IV, pp. 316-316.

Concerning what has been recorded that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Do not exalt me over Jonah (Yūnus Ibn Matta)," a Ṣūfī was asked about this *ḥadīth* but said he would not say what it meant until they gave him a large sum of money. When he received the money, he said that the *ḥadīth* meant that Jonah enjoyed the same closeness to Allah in the stomach of the fish as Muḥammad (peace be on him) enjoyed during the night of his ascension. Ṣūfīs extol such kinds of exegesis, but it only proves their ignorance of the prophetic or divine language. The *ḥadīth* stated above does not occur with those words in any of the reliable books of *ḥadīth*. The words that occur in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* are, "No one should say, 'I am better than Yūnus Ibn Matta'."' Another version of the *ḥadīth* states, "Whoever says, 'I am better than Yūnus Ibn Matta', has committed a falsehood."[82] The words in this *ḥadīth* are general. What they mean is that no one should exalt himself over Jonah. But it does not follow that Muslims should not exalt Muḥammad (peace be on him) over Jonah (peace be on him). Allah has said that Jonah was swallowed by a fish because he had done something that did not behoove him. Allah's words are, "And remember the companion of the fish (Dhu an-Nūn), when he departed in wrath, He imagined that We would not punish him. But he cried through the depths of darkness: 'There is no god but You, Glory to You. I was indeed wrong'" [21:87].

Some people have thought that they were better than Jonah since they did not do what Jonah did. Whoever thinks that is certainly wrong. In fact, every devoted servant of Allah said the same as what Jonah said, "There is no god but You, Glory to You. I was indeed wrong" [21:87], as the first and the last of the prophets said. The first of them, Adam, said, "Our Lord, we have wronged our own souls. If you forgive us not and bestow not upon us Your mercy, we will certainly be lost" [7:23]. And the last and greatest of all the prophets, Muḥammad (peace be on him), said, as reported in an authentic *ḥadīth* from 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib concerning the opening of the prayer, "O Allah, you are the King, there is no god but You. You are my Lord and I am Your servant. I have wronged myself. I admit my mistakes. Forgive me, then, all of my mistakes. No one forgives sins except You..." (to the end of the *ḥadīth*).[83] Moses also

---

[82]Al-Bukhārī, 3415, 3416, 3431; Muslim, 2376, 2377; Abū Dāwūd, 4669; Aḥmad, 1:242, 254.

[83]Muslim, 771; Abū Dāwūd, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 760; At-Tirmidhī, *Ad-Da'wāt*, 3417, 3418, 3419; An-Nasā'ī, 2:129-130; Aḥmad, 1:94, 95.

said, "'My Lord, I have indeed wronged myself. Please forgive me.' And he was forgiven as Allah is the Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful" [28:16].

Allah said about Jonah, "Wait with patience for the command of Your Lord and be not like the companion of the fish" [68:48], thus forbidding the Prophet (peace be on him) to be like Jonah and, instead, commanding him to be like those messengers of resolute purpose. Allah tells him, "Have patience like those of resolute purpose had patience" [46:35]. As for those who say, "I am better than he," given that it is not fitting for a superior to boast over an inferior, what about the case where the boasting person actually is not superior to the others? Truly, Allah does not love arrogant, vainglorious people. In *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* it is recorded that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "It has been revealed to me that you should be humble; no one should boast over another, and no one should affront anyone else."[84] Since Allah has prohibited boasting over ordinary Muslims, what about exalting oneself over a noble prophet? This is why the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "It does not behoove anyone to say, 'I am better than Yūnus Ibn Matta'." This is a general prohibition stating that everyone should refrain from exalting himself over Jonah.

As for the *ḥadīth*, "Whoever says, 'I am better than Yūnus Ibn Matta' is mistaken," if the Prophet (peace be on him) really was superior to Jonah, then this statement would be incorrect and the Prophet (peace be on him) would have been wrong. This possibility is obviously ruled out, as the Prophet (peace be on him) would not utter a falsehood. Therefore, the *ḥadīth* should be taken to refer to men in general. That is, "Whoever says that is mistaken." That the Prophet is not included therein is not difficult to accept. Allah has said, "If you were to join (gods with Allah), truly fruitless would be your work..." [29:65]. Although these words have been addressed to the Prophet (peace be on him), he has been protected from ever committing *shirk*. Therefore, such statements are simply pronouncing a general rule regarding reward or punishment for different acts.

The Prophet stated that he is the leader of all of the Children of Adam because he had to make such a statement, for we could not possibly know his position except through him. Since no prophets would come after him, he had to inform us of his exalted position in Allah's sight. In the same way, he told us about the virtues of the prophets before him (Allah's blessings be on all of them). That is

---

[84]Muslim, *Al-Jannah*, 2865; Abū Dāwūd, *Al-Adab*, 4895; Ibn Mājah, *Az-Zuhd*, 4179.

why he followed up his statement by saying, "and this is not boasting." Could anyone who believes in Allah and the Hereafter actually say that the position of one who ascended to his Lord, a position so great and honorable, is like the position of one who was swallowed by a fish because he had dome something worthy of blame? How can one exalted, honored and favored be equated with one who faced an ordeal and was scolded? One was taken directly to the presence of Allah and the other was chided. The person who gave such an explanation of the *ḥadīth* had built his distorted conclusion on words that the Messenger (peace be upon him) did not say. His words cannot be cited against the view that Allah is above the world, a view which is established by numerous definitive texts and evidences, which exceed one thousand, as we will discuss later, God willing, when discussing the author's statement, "Allah encompasses all things and is above all."

(33) He is very dear to the Lord of the Worlds.

It is confirmed that the Prophet (peace be on him) enjoyed the highest degree of Allah's love, which is *khūllah* (intimacy). He said, "Allah took me as His most intimate friend (*khalīl*) as He had earlier taken Abraham as His most intimate friend."[85] On another occasion he said, "If I were to take an inhabitant of the Earth as my most intimate friend, I would chose Abū Bakr. But Allah, the Most Gracious, has taken your companion (ī.e. the Prophet) as His most intimate friend."[86] Both of these *aḥādīth* are in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* (of Imām Muslim). They clearly refute those who say that *khūllah* (intimacy) was only for Abraham while *maḥabbah* (love) was for Muḥammad. Therefore, they say, Abraham is the *khalīl Allah* ('the intimate of Allah') while Muḥammad is Allah's *ḥabīb* ('beloved'). In the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, there are also the words, "Let it be known that I (the Prophet) have no *khalīl* among mankind."[87]

As for love, it has been confirmed for many others besides the Prophet (peace be on him). For example, Allah says, "Allah loves those who do good" [3:134]; "Truly, Allah loves the pious" [3:76], and, "Truly, Allah loves those who keep themselves pure and clear" [2:222].

---

[85]Part of a *ḥadīth* in Muslim, Al-*Masājid,* 532; also in Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr*, 1686.

[86]Muslim, *Faḍā'il aṣ-Ṣaḥābah*, 2383; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Manāqib*, 3656; Ibn Mājah, 93; Aḥmad, 1:377, 389, 409, 433.

[87]Muslim, 532; Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr*, 1986.

It is clear, therefore, that those who say that intimacy (*khūllah*) was reserved for Abraham and that Muḥammad was only given love (*maḥabbah*) are wrong. The truth is that *khūllah* was reserved for both of them while love was granted to many others. At-Tirmidhī recorded on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās a *ḥadīth* which states, "Abraham is the *khalīl* of Allah. As for me, I am the *ḥabīb* of Allah. And this is not boasting."[88] But this *ḥadīth* is not authentic.

Love has different degrees:

First is *'ilāqah*, where the heart has fondness for the beloved.

Second is *irādah*, where the heart is inclined towards the beloved and seeks the beloved.

Third is *ṣabābah*, where the heart overflows with love which cannot be checked, in the same way that the flow of water into a tunnel cannot be checked.

Fourth is *gharām*, where the love clings to the heart and is always present. From the same root is *ghārim*, which means 'one who keeps constant company'. Allah has used it as an adjective, "...the torment of Hell will always be with them (gharam)" [25:65].

The fifth is *mawaddah* or *wūdd*. This is the pure, sincere and real love. Allah says in the Qur'ān, "The Merciful will set for them His pure love (*wūdd*)" [19:96].

Sixth is *shaghaf*, which is infatuation, or love that has gone into the innermost recesses of the heart.

The seventh is *'ishq*. This is the extreme love that even threatens the life of the lover. One cannot attribute this kind of love to Allah, nor is this the kind of love that the servant has for his Lord, even though some people do use this term. There is a difference of opinion concerning why it is prohibited. Some say that it is because the word never occurs in the Qur'ān or *ḥadīth*. Other reasons are also given. Perhaps, it is prohibited to use this term because it implies lust (shahwah).

Eighth is *tatayyūm*, which means love that enslaves.

Ninth is *ta'abbud*, or worship.

And tenth is *khūllah*. This is the love that permeates and fills the spirit and the heart of the lover.

These types have also been mentioned in different sequences by different people. But the above order is the best. A little reflection will reveal its merits.

---

[88]Part of a long *ḥadīth* in At-Tirmidhī, 3620; Ad-Dārimī, 1:26. However, two of its transmitters, Zam'ah Ibn Ṣāliḥ and Salāmah Ibn Wahrām, are rated weak (*ḍā'if*) transmitters. At-Ṭirmidhī has consequently called it *gharīb*.

Know that *maḥabbah* and *khūllah* have been attributed to Allah. They are attributed in a way becoming His greatness and majesty, as is the case with all His other attributes. Of the different types of love mentioned above, only four are to be predicated of Allah, *irādah, wūdd, maḥabbah* and *khūllah,* since these are the only terms that have been mentioned in the texts (of the Qur'ān and Sunnah).

There is a difference of opinion about the exact definition of mahabbah. Around thirty definitions have been given. But they hardly fare better than love. They usually obscure more than illuminate. Such terms are clear and need no definition. They are as clear as water, air, earth, hunger and so on.

(34) All claims to prophecy after him are false (*ghayy*) and fanciful (*hawa*).

It was established earlier that Muḥammad (peace be on him) was the last of the prophets. Hence, anyone who claims prophethood after him is a liar. If such a person should perform miracles and present clear proofs of his sincerity, how can he be called a liar? We reply to this by saying that such would never occur and the question is merely hypothetical. In fact, it is not possible. This is true because Allah has declared him to be the last prophet. Therefore, it is impossible that anyone could claim to be a prophet and not have some signs that show that his claim is false.

Ghayy is the opposite of *rashād* (rightly guided). And *hawa* means that it comes from a person's desires. That is, such a claim to prophecy is based on the desires of the soul and not on evidence. Hence, it is a false claim.

(35) He has been sent to all jinns and all mankind with truth, guidance, light and illumination.

Concerning the Prophet being sent to all the jinns, Allah states, quoting a jinn, "My people, hearken to the one who invites you to Allah.." [46:31]. Sūrat Al-Jinn also indicates that he was sent to them. Muqātil said, "Allah never sent a messenger to both men and jinns before him." But that is a very strange statement. For Allah has said, "Assembly of jinns and men, did prophets from among you not come to you?" [6:130]. Messengers were only human and there were no jinn messengers. This is what Mujahid and others of the Elders and later scholars stated. Ibn 'Abbās said, "Messengers are from humans, and from jinns are only warners." The apparent meaning of the words of the jinn, "We hearkened to the book that

was revealed after Moses," suggests that Moses was also sent to the jinns. Allah knows best.

Ibn Jarīr reported that Ad-Daḥḥāk Ibn Muzāḥim believed that the jinns did have their own messengers and he used the above verse to support his claim. But using that verse as evidence may not be correct, since it is vague and not specific. It is - Allah knows best - like Allah's statement, "Out of the two come pearls and coral" [55:22], which actually means 'from one of them'.

That the Prophet (peace be on him) was sent to all mankind has been clearly stated in the Qur'ān. Note the following verses, "We have not sent you but as a messenger to all mankind giving them glad tidings and warning them" [34:28]. "Say (Muḥammad): Mankind! I am the messenger of Allah to you all" [7:158]. "This Qur'ān has been revealed to me by inspiration that I may warn you and all those whom it reaches" [6:19]. "And We have sent you as a messenger to mankind and enough is Allah for witness" [4:79]. "Is it a matter of wonderment to men that We have sent our inspiration to a man among themselves – that he should warn mankind and give the good news to the Believers that they have before their Lord the lofty rank of sincerity" [10:2]. "Blessed is He Who sent down the criterion to His servant, that it may be an admonition to all creatures" [25:1]. "And say to the People of the Book and to those who are unlearned: Do you (also) submit yourselves? If they do, they are in correct guidance. But if they turn back, your duty is to convey the Message" [3:20].

The Prophet (peace be on him) also stated, "Allah has given me five things which He did not give to any prophet before me: He supported me by casting fear into the hearts of my enemies, even if they were a month's journey away; He has made the whole earth pure for me and allowed me to pray anywhere I wish, so my followers may offer prayer wherever they are when the time comes; He has allowed me to use the spoils of war that He did not allow to others before me; He has allowed me intercession (*shafā'ah*); and He has sent me to all of mankind, whereas He had sent each earlier prophet only to his own community."[89] This *ḥadīth* was recorded by both Al-Bukhārī and Muslim. He also said, "Whoever hears of me, be he Jew or Christian, and does not believe in me, will go to Hell."[90] This was recorded by Muslim. It is known by necessity, or in other words, it is self-evident to all who know the teachings of

---

[89]Al-Bukhārī, 335, 438, 3122; Muslim, Al-*Masājid,* 521; An-Nasā'ī, *Al-Ghusl,* 1:219-211; Ad-Dārimī, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 1:322-323; Aḥmad, 2:412; At-Tirmidhī, 1553.
[90]Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 153.

the religion of Islam that the Prophet (peace be on him) was sent to all of mankind.

Some Christians argue that he was sent only to the Arabs. This is obviously wrong. If they accept that he was a prophet, they must accept everything he said. He himself stated that he was sent to all mankind. The Messenger (peace be on him) does not lie. Whatever he says must be accepted. Furthermore, it is an established fact that the Prophet (peace be on him) wrote to Xerxes, Caesar, the Negus, Maqawqas, and many other kings of his time, and invited them to Islam.[91]

The author said, "*wa kafati al-wara*" and the use of the *jar* (genitive case) does not seem to be correct, grammatically speaking, with respect to the word *kafah* because the Arabs only use the word in the substantive case.[92]

There are three opinions concerning the syntactic parsing of the Qur'ānic verse, "And We have not sent you (Muḥammad) save as a bringer of good tidings and a warner unto all mankind (*kāfatan li an-nāss*)" [34:28]. The first opinion is that it is the substantive *kaf* and the doer of the action. The *tā* at the end is a hyperbole.[93] The meaning of the verse in this case would be 'You keep the people away from evil.' Some say it is the infinitive *kaff*, meaning *kaffan*, meaning that he is only sent to constrain people from evil completely, the use of the infinitive for the substantive being common. The second opinion is that it is substantive for the word "mankind". But this is objected to because *ḥāl al-majrūr* cannot be preceeded by anything, according to the majority of the scholars. The response to that is that the Arabs use it a lot in that manner and it must be accepted. This is the chosen opinion of Ibn Mālik, the famous grammarian. Therefore, the verse means, "We did not send you except to all the people." The third opinion is that it is an adjective for the unstated, assumed infinitive, meaning, therefore: 'as a complete mission'. The objection to this has already been stated and that is that *kaf* is only used in the substantive case.

The author's words, "the truth (*al-ḥaqq*), guidance (*al-hudā*), light (*an-nūr*) and illumination (*aḍ-ḍīyā'*)" all refer to the Faith (*ad-dīn*) and the Shari'ah which the Prophet (peace be on him) brought

---

[91]For a discussion of this point, see Ibn Taymīyyah, *Al-Jawāb aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ li man Baddala Dīn al-Masīḥ* (Matabī al-Majd at-Tijārīyyah, n.d.), vol. 2, pp. 38-42.

[92]Again, this is in reference to the grammatical structure of the Arabic text of the *Creed* and need not concern the English reader, but has been included in the translation for the sake of completeness.

[93]Otherwise, the word would be feminine.

and which have been established by the texts of the Qur'ān and other proofs. *Ḍīyā'* is stronger than *nūr*. Allah has said, "It is He Who has appointed the sun a dazzling radiance (*ḍīyā'*) and the moon a radiating light (*nūr*)" [11:5].

(36) The Qur'ān is the word of Allah.

It originated from Him as articulated speech in an unknown manner (*bilā kayfīyyah*). Allah revealed it to His Prophet by inspiration (*waḥī*). The Believers bear witness to its revelation. They are certain that is the actual speech of Allah. It is not created like the speech of human beings. Whoever hears it and thinks it is the speech of man is an infidel. Allah has condemned and censured him and threatened him with Hell-Fire when He says, "I will burn him in the Hell-Fire" [74:26]. By Allah's threatening with the Fire those who say, "This is nothing but the word of a mortal" [74:25], we know and become certain that it is the speech of the Creator of mankind and is completely unlike he speech of mankind.

This is one of the basic and most important principles of Islam. But on this question, many people and groups went astray. What Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī, may Allah have mercy on him, stated is the truth, which is proven by Qur'ān and Sunnah for whoever ponders them. It is also supported by natural human endowment (*fiṭrah*) that is not vitiated by doubts or corrupted by erroneous ideas.

People were divided into nine groups over this question of the speech of Allah.[94] These were:

1. The word of Allah is nothing but ideas that descend upon a human soul from the active intellect, according to some, or from a different source, according to others. This is the view of the Sabaeans and the philosophers.

2. It is a creation of Allah that exists separate from Him. This is the view of the Mu'tazilah.

3. It is the thought in the mind of Allah, at once command, prohibition, enunciation and information. When it was communicated in Arabic it became the Qur'ān. When it was communicated in Hebrew it became the Torah. That is the opinion of Ibn Kullāb and those who agree with him, such as Al-Ash'arī and others.

---

[94]In the subsequent discussion, Ibn Abī Al-'Izz closely follows what was written by Ibn Taymīyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, vol. 2, pp. 162-213, and Ibn Al-Qayyīm, *Mukhtasar as-Sawā'iq al-Murṣalāh*, vol. 2, pp. 286-298.

4. It is the outward letters and sounds which assembled in eternity. A group of theologians and scholars of *ḥadīth* hold this view.[95]

5. It is certainly letters and sounds, but Allah uttered them in speech after a time during which He had not spoken. This is the opinion of the Karramīyyah and others.

6. It is the speech of Allah that He brings into being out of His knowledge and will, subsisting by Him. This is the opinion of the author of *Al-Mu'tabar*.[96] Ar-Razī seems to have been inclined to this opinion in his *Al-Maṭālib al-'Alīyyah*.

7. It refers to an idea subsisting in Him, which He created later in someone else. This view was held by Abū Mansūr Al-Māturīdī.

8. It refers to an eternal idea subsisting in Him, as well as the sounds that He created in someone else. This is the view of Abū Al-Ma'ālī and his followers.

9. Allah has been speaking from eternity if, when and as He wills to speak. He has been speaking in words which have sounds that can be heard. As a whole, His speech is eternal, even though a particular sound is not eternal. This is the view of the leading *imāms* of the *ḥadīth* and Sunnah.

The author again has used a *kasrah* in *inna al-Qur'ān kalām Allahu*. The reason for it is the same as in the earlier statements. That is, they are all ruled by the governing words, "We say (*naqul*) about Allah's oneness."[97]

The words of the author, "It originated from Him as articulated speech in an unknown manner (*bilā kayfīyyah*)," are directed against the Mu'tazilah and those who believe that the Qur'ān did not proceed from Allah, as noted above. They say that we call it the word of Allah simply to honor it, in the same way that we say the house of Allah, or the camel of Allah. They misinterpret the texts, and their conclusions are false.

Things that are ascribed to Allah are sometimes intangible and sometimes they are things that exist. When we ascribe objects to

---

[95] In their notes to the text, At-Turkī and Al-Arnawūṭ doubt the ascription of this view to scholars of *ḥadīth* since the opinion is not in conformity with the Sunnah.

[96] The author of *Al-Mu'tabar fī al-Ḥikmah* (Hyderabad, 1375) is Abū Al-Barakāt Ḥibbatullah Ibn Malka (ca. 547/1152), a physician and a very distinguished philosopher of Islam. He was originally a Jew but later embraced Islam. He was the court physician of Al-Mustanjid. He died during Ramaḍān and was buried in Baghdad.

[97] Another grammatical point. After the phrase, "We say (*naqul*)" the following related clauses must begin with a *kasrah* instead of a *hamza* to show that they are related to the first clause.

Allah, we mean that they are distinguished and honorable objects which Allah created. This is what we mean when we say, for example, the house of Allah, the camel of Allah, and so forth. But when we ascribe intangibles to Allah and say, for example, the knowledge of Allah, His power, His honor, His glory, His majesty, His speech, His life, His transcendence, His dominance, which are all His attributes; it is not possible that they were created by Allah.

When we say that Allah speaks, we are affirming one of His attributes of perfection. Its denial is to attribute to Him a defect. This is clearly demonstrated by Allah's statement, "The people of Moses made, in his absence, out of the ornaments the image of a calf (for worship) which seemed to make a lowing sound. Did they not see that it could neither speak to them nor show them the way?" [7:148]. The worshipers of the calf, their infidelity notwithstanding, knew their Lord better than the Mu'tazilah, since they did not say to Moses that His Lord could not speak. About the calf Allah also says, "Could they not see that it would not return them a word (for answer), and that it had no power either to harm them or to do them good?" [20:89]. From this remark it is clear that the inability to answer or speak is an argument which Allah has used to deny the divinity of the calf.

The strongest objection that the Mu'tazilah have raised against Allah's speech is that it would mean comparing Allah with man and attributing to Him a body. This objection is not valid. When we say that Allah speaks we add the qualification, "as it behooves His majesty". Allah has said, "That day We will set a seal on their mouths. But their hands will speak to us, and their feet will bear witness to all that they did" [36:65]. We do believe that hands and feet will speak, but we do not know in what manner they will speak. Similarly, Allah says, "They will say to their skins: 'Why do you bear witness against us?' They will reply: 'Allah has given us ability to speak, He Who gives ability to speak to everything'" [41:21]. We likewise believe that pebbles and food glorified Allah, that stones gave salutation, and the sounds of articulated words came from them even though they did not have a mouth.[98]

The author has pointed to this in his words, "It originated from Him as articulated speech in an unknown manner (*bilā kayfīyyah*)." That is, it proceeded from Him and He uttered it in a manner unknown to us. He further underlines this point by saying, "as articulated speech (*qawl-an*)." *Qawl* is a verbal noun and, as such, it

[98]Muslim, 2277; Aḥmad, 5:89, 95, 105; At-Tirmidhī, 3624; Ad-Dārimī, 1:12; and Al-Bukhārī, 3579; Aḥmad, 1:460; At-Tirmidhī, 3633; Ad-Dārimī, 1:15.

stresses that it was really an action of uttering words. Allah has emphasized the same by using the verbal noun *taklīm*. He says, "*kallama Allahu Mūsa taklima* (Allah spoke to Moses in words)" [4:164]. What can there be other than truth except misguidance?

Some of the Mu'tazilah said to Abū 'Amr Ibn Al-'Alā, "We wish you would read, *kallama Allaha Mūsā*"[99] - changing Allah to the objective case and giving the meaning that Moses spoke. Abū 'Amr said to them, "Suppose I recite the verse in the manner you say, what will you do about the verse, 'When Moses came to the place appointed by Us, and His Lord spoke to Him (*kallamahu Rabbuhu*) [7:143]?" Thus the Mu'tazilah were flustered.

How much evidence is there in the Qur'ān and Sunnah that Allah speaks to the people of Paradise and others? For example, Allah says, "Peace! a word (of salutation) from a Lord Most Merciful" [26:58]. Jābir reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) said, "When the people of Paradise are enjoying their life in happiness, a light will shine forth and they will raise their heads and, lo and behold, Allah will appear to them from above. He will say, 'Peace be on you, people of Paradise.' This is the meaning of Allah's words, 'Peace! a word (of salutation) from a Lord Most Merciful.' He will look upon them and they will look upon Him. They will not turn their glances to any other bounty as long as He looks upon them. (Then) a veil will be drawn over Him. However, His grace and His light will continue to shine over their abode."[100] This *ḥadīth* was recorded by Ibn Mājah and others.

That *ḥadīth* affirms Allah's attribute of speech as it also affirms His visibility and transcendence. Given that, how could the opinion that all of the Lord's speech is one thought be true? Allah says in the Qur'ān, "Surely those who sell the covenant of faith with Allah and their own oaths will have no portion in the Hereafter, nor will Allah speak to them or look at them" [3:77]. Allah will thus humiliate them by not speaking to them. It means that Allah will not speak to them with any noble speech; that is the correct interpretation, because in another verse it states that Allah says to the people in the Hell-fire, "Away with you into this (ignominy)! And speak no more unto Me"

---

[99]Thus changing the meaning to 'Moses spoke to Allah'.

[100]Ibn Mājah, *Al-Muqaddamah*, 184; Abū Nu'aym, *Ḥilyah al-Awliyā' wa Ṭabaqat al-Aṣfiyā* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1400/1980, 3rd edition; henceforth referred to as *Al-Ḥilyah*), vol. 6, pp 208-209. Among the narrators of this *ḥadīth* is Abū 'Asim Al-'Ibadānī, who is slightly weak. And his source was Al-Faḍhl Ibn 'Isa Ar-Ruqāshī, whose *aḥādīth* are rejected. See Al-Haythamī, *Majmā' az-Zawā'id wa Manba' al-Fawā'id* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Arabī, 1402/1982), 3rd edition, vol. 7, p. 98.

[23:108]. It is obvious that if He were not to speak to His faithful servants they would come down to the level of the unfaithful, and there would be no sense in specifying that He would not speak to His enemies.

A subchapter in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Al-Bukhārī has been given the name "The speech of the Lord, Blessed and Exalted, with the People of Paradise." That subchapter contains a number of *aḥādīth*. The greatest blessing that the people of Paradise will receive is the vision of Allah's face and His speaking to them. Denying that is denying the real essence of Paradise, the highest and best blessing available therein.

The Mu'tazilah argue that since Allah has said, "Allah is the Creator of all things," and since the Qur'ān is a thing, it must therefore be created. This is really strange. This is because, according to them, the actions of human beings are created by men and not by Allah. They exclude such acts from being "things" while they include the speech of Allah as a "thing", though it is one of His attributes. By it (His speech), things are created as it is by His command that things come into existence. He says, "(He made) the sun, the moon and the stars subservient by His command (*amr*). Know, it is for Him to create (*khalq*) and to govern (*amr*)" [7:54]. He has thus differentiated between creation and command. If command had been something created, there must have been another command to create it. But this implies a third command to create the second command and so on, *ad infinitum*. This is plainly false. Again, if their argument were extended, it would include such attributes of Allah as knowledge and power, and reduce them to created things, which is open blasphemy. His knowledge is a thing. His power is a thing. His life is a thing. If these things were included under the verse, "Allah is the Creator of all things," they would be considered created after a time when they did not exist. Exalted is Allah above such beliefs.

How can it be correct to become a speaker by someone else's speech? That is not correct. If that were true, all the speech that He creates in any non-living or living animal would equally be His speech and there would be no difference between speaking (*naṭaqa*) and making somebody speak (*anṭaqa*). On the Day of Judgment, our skins will say, "Allah has made us speak" [41:21], and they will not say, "Allah has spoken." It would also mean that He is the speaker of every word that He creates in any creature, be it something false, a lie, an infidelity, or crazed words. Allah is exalted above that. But, in fact, monists do not shy away from such statements. Ibn 'Arabī,

for example, said, "Every word that comes into being is His word, whether it is in prose or in poetry."[101]

If it were correct to be qualified with an attribute that another has, it would be correct to call a seeing person blind and vice-versa, the former because someone else is blind and the latter because someone else is endowed with sight. It would also be correct to ascribe to Allah every attribute that He has created in anything – colors, smells, tastes, measurements, and so on.

Similar objections were made by Imām 'Abdul-'Azīz Al-Makkī against Bishr Al-Murisī in a debate before Al-Mā'mūn. He asked the latter not to go beyond the text of the Qur'ān to prove his point. Bishr appealed to the caliph to direct 'Abdul-'Azīz not to insist on texts from the Qur'ān and to argue with him on other grounds. He said, "If then 'Abdul-'Azīz does not give up his view and accept that the Qur'ān is created, I may be killed." 'Abdul-'Azīz said, "Would you like to open the debate." Bishr said, "You go ahead." 'Abdul-'Azīz said, "You have to take one of the following three positions as there is no fourth possibility. Either Allah created the Qur'ān, His speech in our view, in Himself; or He created it as existing by and in itself; or He created it in something else." Bishr replied, "I believe that Allah created the Qur'ān as He created every other thing," and he refused to reply directly to the question. Al-Mā'mūn asked 'Abdul-'Aziz, "Explain the matter yourself and leave Bishr for he seems confounded." 'Abdul-'Azīz said, "If Bishr says that Allah created His speech in Himself, this is impossible because Allah cannot be the locus of anything contingent and created. He cannot have in Him what is created. If, on the other hand, he says that Allah has created it in something else, he would have to accept that every speech which Allah has created in anything is His speech. Finally, if He says that He has created it as existing by and in itself, that is inconceivable, for there is no speech but what exists by a speaker, as there is no will but what exists by one who wills, and no knowing but what exists by a knower. We cannot think of any speech that exists by itself and speaks by itself. Since all of these possibilities are unacceptable, and the Qur'ān cannot be said to have been created in any of these senses, we conclude that it is an attribute of Allah." This is the gist of the debate that Imām 'Abdul-'Azīz narrated in his book, *Al-Hidah*.[102]

---

[101] Ibn 'Arabī, *Al-Futūḥat al-Makkīyyah* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, n.d.), vol. 4, p. 141.

[102] *Al-Hidah*, pp. 79-80. As noted earlier, this work most likely is not authentically that of 'Abdul-'Aziz.

The denotation of the word *kull* (all) varies according to the context and is determined by the clues that the language carries. Referring to the storm that He sent upon the people of 'Ad, Allah says, "It will destroy all things (*kulli shayy*) by the command of its Lord. Then by the morning nothing was to be seen except their houses" [46:25]. The houses are things but they are not included in the "all things" that were destroyed by the storm. This is because what was meant was that the storm would destroy everything which can usually be destroyed by a strong storm and which deserved to be destroyed. Similarly, Allah described what Bilqis possessed in these words, "She was given all things" [27:23]. What is meant by "all things" here is everything that kings need. This qualification can be understood from the context. What the hoopoe wanted to say is that she had everything to rule her kingdom with and needed nothing. Many other examples of this nature can be given.

The meaning in the verse, "The Creator of all things" [13:12], is everything that is created. Everything other than Allah is created. This will definitely include human acts but certainly would not include Allah and His attributes because they are not other than He. Allah has all the attributes of perfection; they are inseparable from His essence. The separation of the attributes from the essence is inconceivable, as we have said earlier when commenting on the eternity of divine attributes. In fact, the verse which the Mu'tazilah quote in their support goes against them, for if Allah's words, "Allah created everything," were itself created, it could not be cited as an argument.

As for their argument from the verse, "We have made (*ja'alnā*) it a Qur'ān in Arabic" [45:3], it is their weakest argument. When *ja'ala* is used in the sense of *khalaqa* (create), it has only one object. For example, the verses, "He made (*ja'ala*) the darkness and the light" [6:1], "We made (*ja'alnā*) from water every living being. Will they not believe? And We have set (*ja'alnā*) on the earth mountains standing firm, lest it should shake with them, and we have made (*ja'alnā*) therein roadways (between mountains) for them to pass through so that they might find their way. And We have made (*ja'alnā*) the heavens as a canopy well-guarded" [21:30-32].

But when *ja'alnā* takes two objects, it does not mean create. For example, "And break not your oaths after you have confirmed them. Indeed you have made (*ja'altum*) Allah your surety" [16:91]; "And make not Allah's name (*lā taj'alū*) an excuse in your oaths against doing good, or acting rightly" [2:244]; "Those who have made (*ja'alū*) the Qur'ān into shreds" [15:91]; "And take not (*lā taj'al*) with Allah another object of worship" [17:39]; "And they make

(*ja'alū*) into females angels who themselves serve Allah" [43:19]. Such verses are numerous. What I want to say is that we should understand in a similar vein the verse, "We have made (*ja'alnā*) it a Qur'ān in Arabic" [43:3].

Similarly unsound is their argument from the verse, "He has called (*nūdiya*) from the right bank of the valley from a bush in hallowed ground" [28:30]. This means, they claim, that Allah created the words in a bush and Moses heard it from the bush. But they ignore the words that precede and follow the verse. Allah said, "When he arrived there, a voice called (*nūdiya*) him from the right side of the valley" [28:30]. *Nida* is a call from a distance. Hence it means that Moses heard the call from the fringe of the valley. Then Allah says, "In the hallowed ground from a bush" [28:30]. This means that the call was made on the hallowed ground near the bush. For when I say that I heard the words of Zayd from the house, what I mean is that the words came from the house and not that the house spoke. If the words which Moses heard had been created in the bush, the bush would have been their speaker. Hence, the words (which occur in the verse), "Moses, I am Allah, the Lord of the Worlds," would have been uttered by the bush. Now can these words be uttered by something other than Allah?

If it is possible that a thing other than Allah may say these words, it is also correct for Pharaoh to have said, "I am your lord, most high" [19:24]. For both sets of words are created and spoken by a being other than Allah. To meet this objection, they have tried to differentiate between the two speech acts. They say that the former words were created by Allah in the bush, but it was Pharaoh who created the latter words. This leads them to believe that there is a creator other than Allah. This is an issue related to the question of human acts, which we will take up later, God willing.

One might refer to the verse, "This is truly the word of an honored messenger" [69:40; 81:91], and argue that the Qur'ān was produced by a messenger, either Gabriel or Muḥammad. To refute this argument, it is enough to point out that the verse says that is a word of a messenger that is conveying it on behalf of the sender. It does not say that is the word of an angel or prophet. By that, one knows that is being conveyed on behalf of the sender and it was not being created by the conveyor.

Furthermore, the same words are found in two verses; in one verse, it refers to the angel Gabriel and in the other it refers to Muḥammad (peace be on him). This further supports the argument that the Qur'ān is the word of the messenger only in the sense that he was communicating it rather than originating it, for if one had

composed it, the other could not have been its composer. Again, following the words in Sūrah 81, we have the adjective "faithful" (*amīn*) qualifying the messenger. This shows that the messenger communicated the words as they were revealed to him, neither adding anything from himself nor deleting anything. He faithfully conveyed everything he was told.

Again, Allah has condemned as an infidel one who says that the Qur'ān is the word of a man. Since Muḥammad was a man, therefore, whoever says that the Qur'ān is the word of Muḥammad in the sense that he composed it is certainly an infidel. It makes no difference if instead he says that is the word of a jinn or angel. Words are the words of the one who originally states them and not of the one who communicates them. If someone recites the line, "Stop! Let us weep to remember / a beloved and a house..." you will say that is the poetry of Imra' Al-Qays.[103] Similarly, if you hear someone say, "Actions will be judged by their motives, and everyone will have what he intended,"[104] you will say that these are the words of the Prophet (peace be on him). Or if you hear one reciting, "Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, Most Gracious, Most Merciful, Master of the Day of Judgment. You only do we worship and Your aid only do we seek" [1:1-4], you will say that these are the words of Allah - that is, if you have knowledge of those facts. Otherwise you would say, "I do not know whose words these are." If anyone contradicted you on this point, he would be wrong. That is why, whenever one hears a poem or a passage from anyone, he asks, "Are these your words or someone else's?"

In short, the Ahl as-Sunnah, the four schools of *fiqh* and others of the Elders and later scholars all agree that the Qur'ān is the uncreated speech of Allah. Beyond that point, the later scholars differed as to whether the speech of Allah is a single thought existing in itself or if it is words and sounds which Allah uttered at a particular time and not before, or He has been speaking from eternity, if, when, and as He has willed, and that His speech as a class is eternal.

Some Mu'tazilah do say that the Qur'ān is uncreated. But by that they mean that the Qur'ān is not fabricated, concocted or false. That

---

[103]The line quoted here is part of the first verse of a famous ode of his. See his *Diwān*, ed. by Muḥammad Abū Al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār Al-Ma'ārif, 1389/1969), p. 8.

[104]Part of a *ḥadīth* in Al-Bukhārī, 1, 54, 2529, 3898, 5070, 6689, 6953; Muslim, *Al-Imārah*, 1907; Abū Dāwūd, *Aṭ-Ṭalāq*, 2201; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Jihād*, 1647; An-Nasā'ī, *Aṭ-Ṭahārah*, 1:58-60; Ibn Mājah, *Az-Zuhd*, 2427; Aḥmad, 1:25, 43.

is, it is true and authentic. There is no question that this meaning is consistent with what all Muslims believe.

The point on which they have differed is whether the Qur'ān is a thing created by Allah, or whether it is His words which He has spoken and which exist by Him. This was the question put by the Ahl as-Sunnah. As to its fabrication or spuriousness, there is no difference among Muslims that such an allegation is false. There is also no question that the leaders of the Mu'tazilah and others are from heretical sects. They admit that their beliefs concerning *tawḥīd*, Allah's attributes and predestination are not things passed down, either from the Book or the Sunnah or from the leaders of the Companions and those who followed them in goodness. They claim that human reasoning has led them to such conclusions. They claim that they only take legal rulings on practical acts from the leading *imāms*. If people were left to their uncorrupted nature and instinctive reasoning there would not have been differences among them. But Satan has put baseless ideas into their minds and has divided them into sects. The Qur'ān says, "Those who seek causes of dispute in the Book are in a schism far from the purpose" [2:176].

Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī's words imply that Allah has been speaking from eternity as and when He has willed, and that His speech as a class is eternal. This is also the view of Abū Ḥanīfah, as appears in his *Al-Fiqh al-Akbar*, in which he says:

> "The Qur'ān is the word of Allah, whether written in the book, remembered in the hearts, recited by the tongues or revealed to the Prophet. Our recitation of the Qur'ān is created and our writing of the Qur'ān is created and our reciting of it is created. But the Qur'ān itself is not created. What Allah has mentioned in the Qur'ān quoting from Moses and others and from the earlier prophets and from Pharaoh and Iblīs, all of that is the speech of Allah, in which He is informing about them. It is the uncreated speech of Allah. The speech of Moses and other created beings is itself created. But the Qur'ān is the word of Allah and not their speech. Moses heard Allah's words when He spoke to him. He spoke to him with the speech which is His attribute from eternity. And all of His attributes are different from the attributes of the creatures. He knows, but not as we know. He has power, but not as we have power. He sees, but not as we see. He speaks, but not as we speak."[105]

---

[105] *Al-Fiqh al-Akbar*, pp. 40-50.

From Abū Ḥanīfah's words, "Moses heard Allah's words when He spoke to him. He spoke to him by the speech which is His attribute from eternity," it is clear that he means that when Moses came He spoke to him and it does not mean that He was always and will always be saying, "O Moses..." as some people understand from Allah's words, "When Moses came to the place appointed by Us, and His Lord addressed him..." [7:143]. Abū Ḥanīfah's words contradict the view which some of his followers, like Abū Mansūr Al-Māturidī and others, hold that the speech of Allah is one single idea that subsists in Him and is inaudible and what is heard is the sound that Allah creates in the air. And Abū Ḥanīfah's words, "speech which is His attribute from eternity," further refute the view that Allah came to have the attribute of speech at a particular time and not before that.

Some aspects of the views of the Mu'tazilah, such as that the Qur'ān is speech dependent on the will and power of Allah, that He speaks when He wills, and that He speaks one thing after another, are true and must be accepted. Similarly, some ideas of others, such as that the speech of Allah subsists in Him and is His attribute, and that an attribute subsists only in a subject, are also true and must be accepted and adhered to. It is obligatory to accept whatever statements are correct from the different groups and to turn away from whatever of their statements are refuted by the Shari'ah and sound reason.

It may be said to us that our view makes Allah the locus of contingent events. This objection, we may reply, is rather vague. In one sense, events subsist by Allah. None of the earlier scholars have denied this. On the contrary, the texts of the Qur'ān and Sunnah, the statements of the leading *imāms*, as well as the verdict of reason, uphold it.

When the prophets said that Allah said or called or conversed intimately or that He spoke, they certainly did not mean that Allah created those words which exist separately from Him. On the contrary, they wanted their audience to understand that Allah is the speaker of these words, that they subsist in Him, not in anything else, and that He has uttered them. This was the understanding of 'Ā'ishah, as appears in her statement that she made when Allah refuted the allegation that was brought against her, "I thought I was too insignificant a creature for Allah to speak about me in a revelation that would be recited."[106] If by the speech of Allah

---

[106]Part of a long *ḥadīth*, Al-Bukhārī, 2261, 4141, 4750; Muslim, *At-Tawbah*, 2270;

something else was meant, something not what the people generally understood, it would have been explained that it has a different meaning to it, since it is not permissible to delay an explanation from the time it is needed.

Neither language nor reason is aware of a speaker whose speech does not subsist by him. If these (objectors) say that they do not accept this view because it would be conceiving Allah on the pattern of man (*tashbīḥ*), they should not affirm Allah's other attributes either. If they say, "He knows but not as we know," we simply say, "He speaks but not as we speak." In fact, the same holds for all of His attributes.

One cannot conceive of a powerful man whose power does not exist in him or of a living thing whose life does not exist in him. (Similarly, one cannot think of a speaker whose speech does not exist in him.) The Prophet (peace be on him) said, "I seek refuge in Allah's perfect words, which neither the righteous nor the wicked can escape."[107] Can an intelligent person say that the Prophet (peace be on him) sought refuge in a created thing? In fact, that invocation is like his statements, "I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger. I seek refuge in Your forgiveness from Your punishment;"[108] or, "I take refuge in the majesty and power of Allah from the evil that I encounter or might encounter;"[109] and, "I take refuge in Your greatness from being stabbed from beneath."[110] All of those are attributes of Allah. And this aspect has been discussed in its proper place; here we are just making a quick reference to it.

Many later Ḥanafīs believed that the speech of Allah is one and that multiplicity concerns its expression in words, not in itself. Words are created; they are called the word of Allah because they express His speech and communicate it. When it was communicated in Arabic, it became the Qur'ān, and when it was communicated in Hebrew, it became the Torah. Hence, it is the language that varies,

---

Aḥmad, 6:197; Abū Dāwūd, 4735.

[107]Aḥmad, 3:419. Part of a *ḥadīth* rated *ṣaḥīḥ* which has been recorded by Ibn As-Sinnī, *'Amāl al-Yawm wa al-Laylah*, ed. by 'Abdul-Qādir Aḥmad 'Ata' (Cairo: Maktabat al-Kulliyāt al-Azhārīyyah, 1389/1969), p. 632.

[108]Part of a *ḥadīth* in Abū Dāwūd, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 1427; At-Tirmidhī, *Ad-Da'wāt*, 3561; An-Nasā'ī, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 3:248; Ibn Mājah, *Iqāmat aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 1179; Aḥmad, 1:96, 118, 150; Muslim, 486.

[109]Part of a *ḥadīth* in Muslim, *As-Salām*, 2202; Abū Dāwūd, *Aṭ-Ṭibb*, 3891; At-Tirmidhī, *Aṭ-Ṭibb*, 2081; Ibn Mājah, *Aṭ-Ṭibb*, 3522; Aḥmad, 4:217.

[110]Part of a *ḥadīth* in Aḥmad, 2:125; Abū Dāwūd, *Al-Adab*, 5074; An-Nasā'ī, *Isti'adhah*, 8:282; Ibn Mājah, *Ad-Du'ā'*, 3871.

not the speech. When we say that words are the speech of Allah, we say so in a metaphorical sense.

This view is wrong. It would mean that the words, "Do not come near adultery" [17:32], have the same meaning as "Be steadfast in prayer" [2:143]. Similarly, the Verse of the Throne [2:255] would mean the same as the verses concerning transactions involving debt [2:282-3]. And the meaning of Sūrat Al-Ikhlāṣ [112] would mean the same as Sūrat Al-Lahab [111]. Little reflection is needed to be convinced that this view is wrong and conflicts with the beliefs of the Elders.

The truth is that the Torah, Gospel, Psalms[111] and Qur'ān are literally Allah's word. In fact, His words are innumerable and infinite. He has been speaking from eternity what, when, and as He has willed. And He will go on speaking forever likewise. He says, "Say: If the ocean were ink to write the words of my Lord, sooner would the ocean be exhausted than would the words of my Lord, even if we added another ocean like it for its aid" [18:109]; and, "If all the trees on earth were pens and the ocean were ink, with seven oceans behind it to add to its supply, the words of Allah would not be exhausted. For Allah is Exalted in Power and Wise" [31:27]. If what the scriptures contain were simply an interpretation of Allah's speech and not actually Allah's speech, why is it forbidden for the sexually unclean and otherwise impure to touch it? If what they were to recite was not the Word of Allah, why is it forbidden for the sexually unclean to recite the Qur'ān? The speech of Allah is equally what is remembered by hearts, recite by mouths, and written in books. In all of these forms it is literally Allah's speech, as Abū Ḥanīfah has said in *Al-Fiqh al-Akbar*.[112]

If you say, "What is written in the Book is Allah's speech," a literal, correct meaning could be understood. When you say that this speech is written by someone and in his handwriting, this is also literally correct. Similarly, if you say that there is ink in the Book with which the speech is written, this is also literally correct. But when you say that the ink is in the Book, it is not like saying that the heavens and the earth, Muḥammad and Jesus are there in the book. And both these statements are unlike the statement that there is the speech of Allah in the Book. If you do not differentiate between the various meanings of "in" in these statements, you will be mistaken and will not be guided to the truth.

---

[111]This is, of course, in reference to the true revelations and not what is in possession of the Jews and Christians today, called the Old Testament and the New Testament.
[112]*Al-Fiqh al-Akbar*, p. 40.

Similarly, one must differentiate between reading (*qirā'ah*), which is an act of the reader, and the thing read (*maqrū'*), which is the Creator's speech. You will certainly be misled if you do not differentiate between these two. If a person finds written on a parchment, "Know that everything other than Allah is to perish," written by a known scribe, he can literally say that this is a line of poetry by Labīd, or that this is literally the writing of such-and-such scribe. Both these statements are literally correct and the soundness and literal meaning of each are not to be confused with the soundness and literal meaning of the other.

Grammatically, "*qur'ān*" is a verbal noun. It may mean the act of reading, as in the verse, "Carry on the reading (*qur'ān*) at dawn; for the reading (*qur'ān*) at dawn is witnessed" [17:78]. The Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Make the reading (*qur'ān*) sweet with your voice."[113] And sometimes it is used to mean what is being read. Allah says, "When you recite the Qur'ān, seek Allah's protection from Satan, the rejected one" [16:78]; and, "When the Qur'ān is read, listen to it with attention and hold your peace, that you may receive Allah's mercy" [7:204]. The Prophet (peace be on him) used the word in that meaning when he said, "The Qur'ān has been revealed according to seven aḥrūf ('modes')."[114] Many more verses and *aḥādīth* can be cited for the two usages. Things exist at different levels: actual existence in reality, in the mind, in speech and in writing. A thing that exists in reality is comprehended as an idea, then expressed in words, and then recorded. Therefore, it being written in a book is its fourth level of being.

Speech has no relationship with the *muṣḥaf* (written record), but speech is what is written without tongue or mind being mediators. The differences between it being recorded in the scriptures of old and on a fine parchment unrolled and in a Book kept hidden are very clear. When Allah says about the Qur'ān, "And lo, it is in the Scriptures of the men of old" [26:196], He means its mention, description and information about it, in the same way that Muḥammad (peace be on him) is recorded with them (ī.e. his description).

---

[113]Abū Dāwūd, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 1468; An-Nasā'ī, *Al-Iftitaḥ*, 2:179-180; Ad-Dārimī, 2:474; Aḥmad, 4:283, 285, 296, 304; Ibn Mājah, 1342. Its chain is *ṣaḥīḥ*.

[114]Al-Bukhārī, 2419, 2992, 5041, 6936, 7550; Muslim, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 818; Abū Dāwūd, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 1475; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Qir'at*, 2944; An-Nasā'ī, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 2:150-152; Aḥmad, 1:24, 40, 43.

Certainly, the Qur'ān was revealed by Allah to Muḥammad and not to anyone else beforehand. That is why Allah says, "in the scriptures (*zubūr*)," and did not say, "in the written document" nor "in the Parchment." *Zubūr* is the plural of *zubr* and means 'recording and collection'. Allah's statement, "And lo, it is in the Scriptures of the men of old" [26:196], means the scriptures of the people of the past. In the wording and its root, the word is very clear. Hence, the Qur'ān is very clear and free from any kind of confusion. This is similar to the statement, "...whom they will find described (*maktūban*) with them" [7:157]. Here, maktūban means mentioned (or described). This is different from Allah's words, "(and a Scripture inscribed) on fine parchment unrolled" [52:3-4], or "on a guarded tablet" [85:22], or "in a Book kept hidden" [56:78], because the governing word in these types of sentences must either be a "general verb" (*al-fa'al al-'amah*), such as the verbs to be, become, and so on. These verses need such words. Or we can assume *maktūb fī kitāb* ('recorded in a book') which are different from the general verbs.

Al-kitāb sometimes is mentioned and means the place of the writing and sometimes it is mentioned meaning what is being written. One must differentiate between writing the speech in a book and recording the actual thing that exists in reality. Such a thing that exists in writing can only have its description recorded.[115] The more one ponders these meanings, the clearer the difference becomes.

The speech of Allah as an objective reality is what one hears from Him or from His Messenger. When the hearer hears it, he knows it and remembers it. Hence, the speech of Allah is, for the hearer, something heard, known and remembered. When he utters it, it is something read or recited by him. And when he writes it, it is something written by him. In all these forms, it is literally, not metaphorically, the speech of Allah. One cannot deny this and say that what is written in the Book or what is recited by the reciter is not the speech of Allah. Allah says in the Qur'ān, "If one among the pagans asks you for asylum, grant it to him, so he may hear the word of Allah" [9:6]. Obviously, he will not hear the words of Allah from Allah directly but he will hear them from the one who conveys it from Allah. The verse refutes the view that what is heard is only an interpretation of Allah's speech and not the speech of Allah itself. For Allah has said, "Until he hears the word of Allah," and He did not say, "Until he hears the interpretation of Allah's speech." The

---

[115]That it is, one cannot actually record the person Muḥammad or 'Abdullah. The most one can do is mention or describe that person.

words are to be taken literally according to the basic rule. Anyone who says that what is written in the Book is an articulation or a report of Allah's speech, but not the speech itself, contradicts the Qur'ān, the Sunnah and the faith of the Elders of the Muslim nation. That is sufficient to show that he has erred.

Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī's words also reject the view that the speech of Allah is a single inaudible idea, and that what is heard, revealed, recited or written is not the speech of Allah but its formulation. He clearly states, "The Qur'ān is Allah's speech and originates from Him." Similar statements have also been made by many other of the Elders. They stated that the Qur'ān begins from Allah and returns to Him. The statement, "begins from Allah" is directed against the Jahmīyyah of the Mu'tazilah and others who say that Allah created the speech in an object from where it has originated. But the Elders stated, "It begins from Allah," that is, it is Allah Who has spoken it, not any other being. Allah has said in the Qur'ān, "The revelation of this Book is from Allah, the Exalted in Power, Full of Wisdom," [39:1]; "But the word from Me will come true" [22:13]; and, "Say: The Spirit of the Holy (Gabriel) has brought the revelation from Your Lord in truth" [16:102]. And the meaning of the Elders' statement, "It returns to Him," is that it will be completely withdrawn from hearts and paper without leaving anything behind, as has been stated in many *aḥādīth.*[116]

Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī's words, "in an unknown manner (*bilā kayfīyyah*)," means that the modality of Allah's speech is unknown, not that it is called speech in a metaphorical sense. "Allah revealed it to His Prophet by inspiration (*waḥī*)" means that He has sent it down to him through an angel. The angel Gabriel heard it from Allah. The Messenger Muḥammad (peace be on him) heard it from the angel. And he, the Prophet, recited it to the people. Allah says, "It is a Qur'ān which We have divided into parts so that you may recite it to men at intervals. We have revealed it in stages" [17:106], and "The spirit of faith and truth came down with it to your heart and mind, that you may admonish in the perspicuous Arabic tongue" [26:193-195]. This verse also affirms the transcendence of Allah.

Some people have argued that the "sending down" of the Qur'ān (*inzāl al-Qur'ān*) should be understood like the similar phrases in

---

[116]Ibn Mājah, 4049. Commenting on this *ḥadīth*, Al-Buṣīrī stated that its transmitters are reliable (*thiqāt*). See *Misbah az-Zujajah fī Zawā'id Ibn Mājah*, ed. by Mūsa Muḥammad 'Alī and Dr. 'Izzat 'Alī 'Ati'ah (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Ḥadithah), p. 254. Also see the *ḥadīth* in Al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mustadrak*, 4:473.

the Qur'ān, such as "sending down rain" (*inzāl al-matar*), "sending down iron" (*inzāl al-ḥadid*), and "sending down eight kinds of cattle" (*inzāl thamānīyat azwāj min al-an'ām*). The answer to this argument is that, in the case of the Qur'ān, it has been specifically stated that is sent down from Allah. Note all of the following verses, "*Ḥā Mīm*. The revelation of this Book is from Allah, exalted in Power, Full of Knowledge" [40:1-2]; "The revelation of this Book is from Allah, the Exalted in Power, Full of Wisdom" [39:1]; "a revelation from Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful" [42:2]; "This is the revelation of the Book, in which there is no doubt, from the Lord of the Worlds" [32:2]; "We sent it down during a blessed night; for We ever wish to warn against evil. In that night is made distinct every affair of wisdom by command from Our presence. We have been sending (Our message)" [4:2-5]; "Say: Then bring a book from Allah which is a better guide than either of them, that I may follow it! Do, if you are truthful" [28:49]; "Those to whom We have given the Book know full well that it has been sent down from your Lord in truth" [6:114]; and, "Say: The Holy Spirit (Gabriel) has brought the revelation from your Lord in truth" [16:102].

But in the case of rain, it has been specifically mentioned that is sent down from the sky, "We send down pure water from the sky (*as-samā'*)" [25:48], that is, from above. At another place, it has been made clear that is being sent down from *al-muzun* [56:69], and at a second place from *al-mu'ṣirāt* [78:14]. Both of these phrases mean the clouds. As for iron or cattle, nothing has been mentioned concerning their source. Therefore, how can one liken the sending down of the Qur'ān with these other types of sending down? Iron is a mineral that is found in the mountains, the highest portions of the earth. It is said that the higher up it is found, the better the quality.

Similarly, animals are created through birth, which requires the sperm to come down from the loins of the male animal into the womb of the female animal. That is why the word anzal is used and not yunzil. Then the fetus comes down from the womb of the mother to the earth. Furthermore, it is well-known that the male animal is on top of the female during mating, so the sperm travels from an upward location downwards. Then, when the animal is born, it once again moves downward from the womb. There are two ways one can understand the verse, "And He provided for you (*anzala lakum*) of (*min*) cattle" [39:6]. *Min* here could be understood to mean, "We provided for you types of animals, eight pairs of animals," or "We provided for you cattle which are of eight types...." The following verse can also be understood in the same

two ways, "He has made for you pairs of yourselves, and of the cattle also pairs..." [42:11].

Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī's words, "The Believers bear witness to its revelation," mean that what he has said about the Qur'ān being the speech of Allah and about its revelation is the belief of the Elders, the Companions of the Prophet (peace be on him) and their righteous successors. And that this is the truth.

His words, "They are certain that is the actual speech of Allah. It is not created like the speech of humans," are directed against the Mu'tazilah and others. He has said the word, "actual" in order to refute the erroneous view that Allah's speech is one inaudible idea or that it is mental speech (*kalām nafsī*) that is not heard from Him. A speech act which is thought and not spoken is not speech in reality, otherwise a mute would also be a speaker. It would also follow that what is written in the scripture cannot be called Qur'ān or the word of Allah; it would only be an interpretation of Allah's speech not the speech itself. If a mute were to gesture concerning something and another person understood him and wrote down what he was trying to say, it would be the latter person's words that he used to express the mute's idea. This example exactly illustrates the view they hold. To be sure, they do not call Allah mute; but they do say that the angel grasps the idea that subsists in Allah without any letters or sounds. The angel grasps this pure idea and then he expresses it in words. It is the angel, then, that composed the Qur'ān and articulated it in Arabic, or Allah created the words of the angel in a thing other than him, such as air.

To those who say that the speech of God is a single idea, we may put the following question. Did Moses (peace be on him) hear all of the idea, or just part of it? If the answer is that he heard all of it, then the claim is that he heard all of the speech of Allah. It is obvious that that is not correct. If the answer is that he heard part of the idea, this implies that the idea is divisible. The same would be true of every other word which Allah has spoken or revealed to anyone. Again, when Allah said to the angels, "I will create a vicegerent on the earth" [2:30], or, "Bow down to Adam" [2:34], was it the whole of His speech or part of it? If the reply is that it was the whole speech, it is absurd. But if the answer is that it was a part, it would amount to admitting that Allah's speech is not singular but multiple.

There are four different opinions about what *kalām* (speech) and *qawl* (statement) mean. One opinion is that it connotes the word as well as the meaning, just as the word *insān* (man) connotes both the body and the spirit. This is the view of the Elders. The second is

that it connotes the word only, and the meaning is not part of its connotation but only its implication. A group of the Mu'tazilah and others hold this view. The third is that it connotes the meaning only and its application to the word is only metaphorical, since the word is only a sign for the idea. This view is held by Ibn Kullāb and his followers. The fourth is that at times it connotes the word and at times the idea. Some later followers of the Kullābī school are of this opinion. And they (the followers of Ibn Kullāb) also have a third view, which has been narrated from Abū Al-Ḥassan. This view states that when it refers to Allah's speech, it is used metaphorically, but when it refers to human speech, its meaning is literal. This is so, he says, because the speech of men exists by them, since there can be no speech without a speaker. But the speech of Allah, he thinks, does not exist by Him. Therefore, it cannot be said to literally be His speech. For an elaborate discussion of these views, see the relevant works.

Those who believe that Allah's speech is one, argue from the lines of Akhtāl, "Indeed speech exists in the heart/The tongue is simply its indicator."

This proof is incorrect. It is strange that when someone cites a *ḥadīth* from one or the other of the two *Ṣaḥīḥ* collections, they object to it and say that is only a solitary report (*khabar al-wāḥid*), even though scholars agree that such a *ḥadīth* should be accepted and acted upon. But on the other hand they argue from a poet's couplet, which is doubtful and not even found in his *diwan* (collection of poems). In fact, the first line of the couplet has been narrated in a different way, "Indeed the thought (*al-bayān*) exists in the heart..." This seems to be more authentic. Even if we grant that the lines are Akhtal's to begin with, we cannot use them as proof. The Christians deviated with respect to the meaning of *kalām*. They believe that Jesus (peace be on him) is the Word of Allah (*logos*). They claim that divinity merged in him with his humanity, or that he is partly human and partly divine. Would it then be acceptable to argue from the lines of a Christian poet who has a mistaken view of theology and *kalām* while disregarding the meaning of *kalām* which is established and well known in Arabic? Furthermore, the meaning of the couplet is not correct. It implies that a mute is to be regarded as a speaker, since he has speech in his mind even though he cannot utter it nor can people hear him. I have stated the points here briefly. For details, one should refer to the relevant works.

There is an interesting point concerning this view. It has a close affinity with the beliefs of the Christians regarding divinity and humanity. They say that the speech of Allah is only an idea that

exists in Him and is inaudible. As for its articulated form, it is created. Hence, the relationship between the speech of Allah, as an eternal idea subsisting in His essence, and the created words, which express the idea, is like the divine appearing in a man who, as the Christians believe, is Jesus. Notice this interesting resemblance.[117]

Another proof that Allah's speech is not just an idea existing in Him is the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet (peace be on him), "No human speech is permitted during our prayers."[118] Another *ḥadīth* states, "Allah commands whatever He wills, and He commands that you should not speak during your prayers."[119] The scholars are agreed that if someone unnecessarily and intentionally speaks during prayer, his prayer is nullified. They also all agree that the thoughts that occur in one's mind concerning worldly things do not nullify the prayer; only speech nullifies the prayer. This shows that the Muslims are in agreement that (the thought in the mind) is not speech.

There is also a *ḥadīth* in the two *Ṣaḥīḥ*s that states that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Allah overlooks for my nation the thoughts that occur in the minds as long as they are not spoken aloud or acted upon."[120] Hence the Prophet (peace be on him) differentiated between the thought in the mind (*ḥadīth an-nafs*) and speech. He stated that no one would be punished for evil thoughts unless he spoke them (or acted upon them). There is no difference on this point among the scholars. It is clear, therefore, that only what is uttered by the tongue is speech (*kalām*). This is what is known from the Arabic language in which the Law-Giver has addressed us.

There is also a *ḥadīth* in the *Sunan* that Mu'ādh asked the Prophet (peace be on him) whether people will have to account for what they say. The Prophet (peace be on him) told him, "Will anything hurl people on their faces in the Fire other than what the tongues reap?"[121] This also shows that speech is an act of the

---

[117]See Ibn Taymīyyah, *Al-Jawāb aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 3, p. 73.

[118]Part of a *ḥadīth* in Muslim, *Al-Masājid*, 537; Abū Dāwūd, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 930; An-Nasā'ī, *As-Sahw*, 3:14-18; Aḥmad, 5:448, 449.

[119]Abū Dāwūd, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 924; An-Nasā'ī, *As-Sahw*, 3:19; Aḥmad, 1:377, 409, 415, 435, 463; Al-Ḥumaydī, 94; Ibn Abī Shaybah, Muṣannaf, 2:37.

[120]Al-Bukhārī, 2528, 2529, 6664; Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 127; Abū Dāwūd, *Aṭ-Ṭalāq*, 6:156-157; Ibn Mājah, *Aṭ-Ṭalāq*, 2040.

[121]Part of a *ḥadīth* in At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Īmān*, 2619; Ibn Mājah, 3973; Aḥmad, 5:231, 236, 237. Its chain in At-Tirmidhī is broken, but Al-Arnawūṭ has called it a *ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīth* due to its numerous pieces of supporting evidence.

tongue. In short, the words *qawl* (statement) and *kalām* (speech) and all of their derivatives – perfect, imperfect, imperative, participial and so on – refer to word as well as meaning in the Qur'ān, *ḥadīth* and language of the Arabs. There was never any dispute among the Companions or their righteous followers regarding the meaning of *kalām*. It was disputed only in later times by heretical scholars, whereafter the controversy spread far and wide.

There is no question, then, that to know the meaning of *kalām*, *qawl* and similar terms, we do not have to refer to a poet. Every speaker of Arabic, past or present, has used these words and knows what they mean, just as he knows what *ra's* (head), *yad* (hand) and *rijl* (leg) mean.

Definitely anyone who says that the speech of Allah is an idea existing in Him and what is read, remembered, written or heard from any reciter is an account (*ḥikāyah*) of His speech and something created, is also saying that the Qur'ān is created, although he may not be aware of it. Allah says, "Say: If the whole of mankind and jinns were to gather together to produce the like of the Qur'ān, they could not produce the like thereof" [17:88]. What is referred to here? Is Allah pointing to what is in His mind or to what is recited and heard by the people? Obviously, it is to what is recited and heard by the people, for what is in the soul of Allah is not something to be pointed to, sent down, recited or heard. The words, "They could not produce the like thereof" cannot mean that they would not be able to produce something like what is in Allah's soul, which they cannot even hear or know. There is no way to know or gain access to what is in the soul of Allah.

If they say that Allah is pointing to the representation and formulation of what is in His soul, rather than itself, and that this is what is recited, written or heard, they are simply saying that the Qur'ān is created. They commit a blasphemy greater than that of the Mu'tazilah, because to represent (*ḥikāyah*) a thing is to produce something like or similar to it. This would amount to the representation and simulation of Allah's attributes. Furthermore, if the recitation were a kind of representation, it would mean that men can produce speech similar to the speech of Allah, and this would contradict the inimitability of the Qur'ān. It would also mean that the reciter uses letters and sounds to represent something that is without letters and sounds.

But we know that the Qur'ān consists of *sūrahs* that are arranged and verses that are articulated, and that are written on sacred leaves. Allah says, "Bring then ten *sūrahs* forged like unto it" [11:13];

"Nay, these are verses self-evident in the hearts of those endowed with knowledge; and none but the unjust reject our verses" [29:49]; and, "It is in books held greatly in honor, exalted in dignity, kept pure and holy" [80:13-14]. Ten good deeds are recorded for every letter of the Qur'ān that a person recites. The Prophet (peace be on him) said, "I do not say that *Alif Lām Mīm* is a letter; rather, *alif* is a letter, *lām* is a letter and *mīm* is a letter."[122] It is the Qur'ān which is preserved in the hearts of its memorizers and heard from the tongues of its reciters. Sheikh Ḥāfiẓ ad-Dīn An-Nasafī said in *Al-Manār*, "The Qur'ān is the name for both the wording and the meaning."

Other theologians have made similar statements. It is attributed to Abū Ḥanīfah that he once said it was sufficient to recite the Qur'ān in Farsi during prayer, but he later changed his mind and said, "It is not permissible for anyone who has the ability to recite (in Arabic) to recite it in other than Arabic." Others have said that if someone reads it in other than Arabic, he must either be crazy and deserve medical attention or he is a heretic who deserves to be killed. This is so because Allah spoke it in that language. Its miraculous nature is in both its language and its meaning.

The author has said, "Whoever hears it and thinks it is the speech of man is an unbeliever." Those who deny that the Qur'ān is the word of Allah, or say that it is the word of Muḥammad or any other creature, human or angel, are undoubtedly unbelievers. Even those who say it is the word of Allah but then distort the meaning of that statement are no different from those who say, "This is nothing but the words of a mortal" [74:25]. They share in such unbelief. Satan has certainly led those people astray. God willing, we will discuss their situation in particular while discussing the author's words, "We do not charge anyone who faces the Ka'bah in prayer with unbelief on the basis of a sin unless he holds that sin to be lawful."

The words of the author, "It is completely unlike the word of any mortal," mean that it is incomparably more eloquent, true and dignified. Allah has said, "Whose words would be truer than Allah's?" [4:87]; "Say: If the whole of mankind and jinns were to gather together to produce the like of the Qur'ān, they could not produce the like thereof" [17:88]; "Say: Bring ten *sūrahs* similar to it" [11:13]; and, "Say: Bring then a *sūrah* like unto it" [10:38]. The Arabs who were masters of Arabic and bitterly opposed to the

---

[122] At-Tirmidhī, *Thawāb al-Qur'ān*, 2912; Ad-Dārimī, *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*, 2:429; Al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mustadrak*, 1:555.

Qur'ān could not produce a small *sūrah* like any of those in the Qur'ān. This proves the veracity of the Messenger's statement that it is from Allah. They were incapable of producing anything similar to it with respect to both its language and its meanings. In fact, they could not produce anything even similar to either of these two aspects. This was the case because the Qur'ān was in perfect Arabic, absolutely flawless and most eloquent. The challenge that no human can produce anything like it is with respect to both its language as well as its meanings, that is, words as well as meaning, not just language. The disjoined letters at the beginning of various *sūrahs* of the Qur'ān point to the Qur'ān's having been revealed in the language and style that the Arabs were acquainted with.

Haven't you noticed that after every such set of disjoined letters there comes a mention of the Qur'ān? For example, "*Alif Lām Mīm*. This is the Book without doubt" [2:1-2]; "*Alif Lām Mīm*. Allah! There is no God but He, the Living, the Self-Sustaining, Eternal. It is He Who sent down to you (step by step) in truth the Book" [3:1-3]; "*Alif Lām Mīm Ṣād*. A Book revealed to you" [7:1-2]; and, "*Alif Lām Rā*. These are the verses of the Book of Wisdom," [19:1-2], and so on. This is to remind them that the noble and gracious Prophet (peace be on him) who was sent to them did not bring them what they could not understand. Instead, he addressed them in their own language.

Heretics have often used the disjoined letters as a pretext to deny that Allah has uttered the Qur'ān or that Gabriel heard it from Him. They have similarly used the verse, "There is nothing like unto Him" [33:11], to deny the attributes of Allah. But the rest of the latter verse, "and He is the Hearing, the Seeing," refutes their denial of divine attributes. Similarly, many verses, such as "then bring a *sūrah* like unto it" [10:38], also refute their view that the words of the Qur'ān were not revealed. This is because the verse challenges people to produce a *sūrah*, not just separate letters or words. And the shortest *sūrah* in the Qur'ān consists of just three verses. This is why Abū Yūsuf and Muḥammad, the students of Abū Ḥanīfah, have said that during prayers one should not recite fewer than three short verses or one long verse equivalent to them, as any part of the Qur'ān less than that may not be inimitable. And Allah knows best.

(37) Anyone who attributes something human to Allah is an infidel.

All those who grasp this point will take heed and refrain from saying things such as the unbelievers say. And they will know that He, in His attributes, is not like human beings.

Having said that the Qur'ān is literally the word of Allah, originating from Him, the author thought it proper to remention that Allah is not like man in any of His attributes. Negation follows affirmation in order to remove the possibility of anthropomorphism. That is, although Allah certainly speaks, His speech does not share the attributes that characterize human speech, for "there is nothing like Allah and He is the All-Hearing, All-Seeing" [42:11]. This verse is the best example for anyone to follow who wants to affirm the attributes of Allah and avoid both anthropomorphism and negation. He wants to secure the pure and delicious milk that trickles down from between the excretion of negation and the blood of anthropomorphism. The negator, in fact, worships a void. And the anthropomorphist worships an idol. We will elaborate this point later while commenting on the author's statements, "Anyone who does not avoid both negation and anthropomorphism strays far away and fails to glorify Allah," and "Islam is between negation and anthropomorphism." There is no question that negation is worse than anthropomorphism. We will also discuss that later. The way Allah has described Himself, and the way the Prophet (peace be on him) described Him, contain no anthropomorphism. The attributes of the Creator are as it behooves Him. And the attributes of the created are as it behooves them.

The words, "All those who grasp this point will take heed," mean that if one ponders what the author has said regarding the affirmation of Allah's attributes and the negation of anthropomorphism and its evil consequences, he will understand and not make statements similar to that of the disbelievers.

(38) The seeing of Allah by the people of Paradise is factual, without their vision being all-encompassing and without the manner of their vision being known.

As it states in the Book of our Lord, "Some faces that Day will beam looking towards their Lord" [75:22-23]. The explanation of this is as Allah wills and according to His knowledge. Whatever the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) has said about it and has come down to us through authentic *aḥādīth* will come to pass as he said it and meant it. We do not try to interpret his words according

to our opinions and imaginations. No one is safe in his faith unless he submits completely to Allah (to Whom belongs glory and greatness) and His Messenger (peace be on him) and entrusts the knowledge of things that are ambiguous to the one who knows them.

The Jahmīyyah and the Mu'tazilah deny the beatific vision, as do some of the Khārijīs and Imāmīyyah. But their view is wrong and refuted by the Qur'ān and Sunnah. Those who affirm their belief in the vision constitute the majority of the Muslim nation, including the Companions of the Prophet, their Successors, the *imāms* of Islam whom the community hails as their leaders, the scholars of *ḥadīth*, and all of the theological schools of the Ahl as-Sunnah. The belief in the beatific vision is one of the most important and greatest principles of Islam. It is the goal that those who have worked hard are preparing for. It is this that the competitors are competing for, and only those who have been veiled from their Lord and turned from its gate will refuse it.

From the evidence for it, the author has mentioned the verse, "Some faces that Day will beam looking towards their Lord." This is one of the clearest proofs. But those who are bent upon altering the meaning of the Qur'ānic verses under the guise of *ta'wīl* (reinterpretation) will find various verses on the Hereafter, Paradise, Hell and Judgment quite easy to twist. If anyone is determined to misinterpret a text and give it a meaning which does not fit into the context, it may not be difficult for him to find such a way.

This approach has played havoc with religion and life. This is what the Jews and Christians did with the texts of the Torah and Gospel. Allah has warned us against doing the same. But vicious people have not heeded the warning and have in fact followed in their footsteps. What harm misinterpretation has done to Islam and Muslims! Was not 'Uthmān, may Allah be pleased with him, killed because of a misinterpretation of the texts? Did not the battles of the Camel and Ṣiffīn, the killing of Al-Ḥussayn, and the incidents of Al-Ḥarrah[123] take place on account of it? Did not the Khārijīs, Mu'tazilīs and Rāfiḍīs commit their heresies because of it? And did

---

[123]'Uthmān was killed in the year 35 A.H. The battle of the Camel took place at Baṣrah the following year between the army of 'Alī, on the one side, and the army of 'Ā'isha, Ṭalḥah and Az-Zubayr, on the other. The Battle of Ṣiffīn, a place near Ar-Raqqah on the bank of the Euphrates River, took place in the year 37 A.H. Al-Ḥussayn was killed at Karbalah, near Kūfah, on the tenth of Muḥarram, 61 A.H. And in 63 A.H., the army of Yazīd Ibn Mu'āwīyah attacked Madinah and slaughtered men and women in the eastern part of the city, called Ḥarrah, or Ḥarrat Waqim.

not the Muslim nation become divided into seventy sects because of it?

The above-mentioned verse associates looking (naẓar) with the face, which is its proper position. It takes the preposition *ilā* meaning 'towards'. This clearly shows that what is meant in that verse is seeing with the eyes. And since there is no counter-indication that the apparent meaning is not the intended meaning, it is clear that seeing the face of Allah with the eyes is what is meant.

The word naẓar may mean different things according to its use with or without a preposition. When it is used without a preposition, it means 'to wait', as in the verse, "Wait for us (*unẓurūnā*), so that we may borrow some light from you" [57:13]. When it is followed by the preposition *fī* it means 'to think or reflect upon', as in the verse, "Do they not reflect upon (*lam yanẓuru fī*) the sovereignty over the heavens and the earth" [7:185]. However, when it is followed by the preposition *ilā*, it means 'to see with the eyes', as in the verse, "Look at (*unẓuru ilā*) its fruits when it bears fruit" [6:99]. And what if, in addition, the face, which is the place from which one sees, is explicitly mentioned? Ibn Mardawayh recorded through his chain of authorities from Ibn 'Amr that the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) said about the verse, "Some faces that Day will beam looking towards their Lord" [75:22-23], "The faces will beam due to the radiance and beauty of Allah's face."[124] Al-Ḥassan said, "Faces will look at their Lord and will be brightened by His light." Ibn 'Abbās, as was related by Abū Ṣāliḥ,[125] said, "Looking towards their Lord means that they will look upon the face of their Lord, the Most High." 'Ikrimah said, "Some faces will that Day beam because of the blessing they enjoy. And 'looking towards their Lord means that they will look upon their Lord." He also quoted a similar statement from Ibn 'Abbās. This is the view of all the commentators of the Qur'ān among the Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah.

Allah has said, "They will have there all that they wish, and there will be more besides" [50:35]. Aṭ-Ṭabarī mentions that 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib and Anas Ibn Mālik stated that the reference in the verse is to the vision of Allah.[126]

---

[124]Aṭ-Ṭabarī has recorded this report in his commentary, *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, vol. 29, p. 120. Its chain is very weak. It contains Thuwayr Ibn Abī Fakhtah, about whom it is said that he lied and his *aḥādīth* should not be accepted.

[125]Abū Ṣāliḥ is not reliable according to Ibn 'Adīy.

[126]Aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, vol. 26, pp. 173-176.

Similarly, in the verse, "To those who do good there is a goodly reward (*ḥusnah*) and more besides (*zīyādah*)" [10:26], "goodly reward" means Paradise, and "more besides" means looking upon the face of Allah. This is how the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) and his Companions explained that verse. Muslim recorded in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* from Ṣuhayb that the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) recited the verse, "To those who do good there is a goodly reward and more besides," and then said, "When the people of Paradise enter Paradise and the people of Hell enter Hell, a voice will call, 'People of Paradise! Allah has given you a promise which He wishes to fulfill.' They will say, 'What is it? Has He not tilted the balance in our favor, made our faces bright, saved us from the Fire, and entered us into Paradise?' Thereupon Allah will lift the veil and they will look upon Him. He will not give them anything dearer and lovelier than a look at His face. And that is the *zīyādah* (mentioned in the verse)."[127]

This *ḥadīth* has also been recorded by other compilers of *ḥadīth* and has been transmitted through different chains and with different wordings. They all say that "more" in the verse means looking upon the face of Allah. The Companions of the Prophet (peace be on him) also explained the verse in a similar fashion. Ibn Jarīr Aṭ-Ṭabarī recorded such from a number of them, including Abū Bakr Aṣ-Ṣiddiq, Abū Ḥudhayfah, Abū Mūsā Al-Ash'arī and Ibn 'Abbās, may Allah be pleased with all of them.

Allah also says, "Truly, from that Day they will be veiled from their Lord" [83:15]. Ash-Shāfi'ī and other *imāms* have used this verse as proof of the beatific vision for the people of Paradise. Aṭ-Ṭabarī and others recorded from Al-Muzanī from Ash-Shāfi'ī, and Al-Ḥākim recorded from Al-Aṣamm from Ar-Rabi'a Ibn Sulaymān, who said, "I was with Muḥammad Ibn Idrīs Ash-Shāfi'ī when a letter came to him from As-Sa'īd inquiring as to his opinion about the verse, 'Truly from that Day, they will be veiled from their Lord,' and he said, 'Since some people will incur the wrath of Allah and will not be allowed to see Him, it implies that the friends of Allah will have His pleasure and will be able to see Him.'"[128]

The Mu'tazilah, on the other hand, argue from the verses, "You cannot see me" [7:143], and "No vision can grasp Him" [6:106].

---

[127]Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 81; At-Tirmidhī, 2555, 3104; Ibn Mājah, 187; Aḥmad, 4:332, 333. The wording of the *ḥadīth* quoted here is that of Ibn Mājah.

[128]Al-Bayhaqī, *Manāqib Ash-Shafi'ī*, ed. by As-Sayyīd Aḥmad Saqar (Cairo: Maktabah Dār at-Turāth, 1391/1971), vol. 1, p. 419.

But the fact is that these verses go against them. Take the first verse. It suggests the possibility of the beatific vision in many ways. First, a person like Moses, whom Allah honored by talking to him and making him His messenger and who knew his Lord more than anyone of his time, cannot be imagined to have requested something which was not possible for him to request. The Mu'tazilah, on the other hand, believe that what he asked for is the greatest impossibility.

Second, Allah did not rebuke Moses for asking for the vision, although when Noah asked for his son to be saved, Allah rebuked him for his request, saying, "I give this counsel to you lest you act like the ignorant" [11:46].

Third, Allah only said to Moses, "You will not see Me." He did not say, "I cannot be seen," "It is impossible to see me," or "I am invisible." The difference between the two sets of answers is clear. Suppose you have a stone in your pocket and someone who thinks it is food begs you for it. The correct response would be, "It is not food." But suppose you did have something edible in your pocket. The correct response then could be, "You will never eat it." Hence, the correct understanding of the verse is that Allah is visible, but Moses was not able to see Him in this world because human faculties are not capable of seeing Him.

Fourth, Allah says, moreover, "Look at the mountain. If it abides in its place, then you will see Me" [7:143]. In other words, if a solid and strong thing like the mountain cannot stand the manifestation of Allah in this world, how can a weak creature like man stand up to it?

Fifth, Allah does have the power to make the mountain abide in its place when He manifests Himself. It was certainly possible, and that is the reason He made the vision contingent on it. Had it been impossible, there would have been no difference between what He said and the words, "If the mountain abides in its place, I will eat, drink and sleep," as these are all the same to the Mu'tazilah.

Sixth, Allah states, "When His Lord manifested His glory on the mountain, He made it as dust" [7:143]. If, as these words say, Allah could manifest Himself to a lifeless thing like a mountain, which is not a being that may perceive reward or punishment, why should He not manifest Himself to His prophets and friends in the Abode of Grace? In fact, what He wanted to teach Moses was that when a mountain could not stand His manifestation, even more so a weaker being like man could not stand it.

Seventh, it is a fact that Allah spoke to Moses, called him and entered into a dialogue with him. Now, if it was possible for anyone to converse with Allah, to speak with Him and to hear from Him

without any intermediary, it should even more so be possible for him to see Him. One cannot deny vision without denying such a conversation. Hence, no wonder that the Mu'tazilah denied that, too.

As for the argument that *lan*[129] in *lan tar'anī* ('You will not see me') rules out the vision forever, even in the Hereafter, it is not correct. *Lan* does not necessarily negate something for all times to come, even if it is followed by a word like *abadan* (forever). Therefore, without the word "forever," it certainly does not imply eternity. For example, Allah has said, "But never (*lan*) will they express such desire" [2:95]; but later says, "Then they will cry out: 'Angel! Let your Lord put an end to us'" [43:77]. Again, if the denial had ruled out the vision forever, it would not have been contingent upon something else. In such cases, which are quite common in the Qur'ān, lan does not negate a thing forever. Allah says, "I will not leave (*lan abraha*) this place until my father permits me" [12:80]. This demonstrates that lan does not perpetuate the negation. Sheikh Jamāl Ad-Dīn Ibn Mālik has written, "Whoever thinks *lan* denies something forever, His view I reject and uphold the contrary.

As for the second verse, "Vision does not grasp Him" [6:106], I will show that it suggests the possibility of vision in a very subtle way. Allah has said these words while praising Himself. And to praise is to affirm something, but to simply negate something is not to affirm anything. Therefore, you cannot praise anybody simply by denying something. When Allah praises Himself with a negation, it implies an affirmation. For example, when He denies slumber or sleep for Himself, it is praise because it implies the perfection of His world-sustaining activity. Similarly, the negation of death implies the perfection of His life; the negation of weariness implies the perfection of His energy; the negation of any partner, wife, son, daughter or assistant implies the perfection of His lordship, divinity and authority; the negation of eating and drinking implies the perfection of His self-sufficiency; the negation of intercession without His permission implies His absolute oneness and autonomy; the negation of injustice implies the perfection of His justice, knowledge and self-sufficiency; the negation of forgetting and ignorance implies the perfection of His knowledge and its all-comprehensiveness; and the negation of any peers implies the perfection of His essences and attributes.

---

[129]Implying future negation.

That is why Allah does not praise Himself by simply negating something that does not imply anything positive. The object that is qualified with some want shares that want with non-being; and no one can be perfect that shares something with non-being. The true meaning of the verse, therefore, is that, even though Allah can be seen, He cannot be grasped or encompassed. So the words, "Vision does not grasp Him" [6:106], underlie His greatness, that He is so exalted above everything that none will encompass Him, even though they will see Him. Idrak means 'to comprehend and to encompass'; it is more than simply seeing. The Qur'ān says, "When the two groups saw each other, the people of Moses said, 'We are going to be overtaken (*mudrakūn*). He (Moses) said, 'By no means" [26:61-62]. Moses did not deny being seen (*rū'yah*]. He only denied that they would be overtaken (*idrak*). *Rū'yah* and *idrak* sometimes go together but not always. One can see Allah but cannot grasp Him, just as one can know Him but cannot comprehend Him. This is how the Companions of the Prophet and the *imāms* have understood this verse, as is clear from their comments quoted earlier. But this aspect is not confined only to Allah; the sun which Allah created may be seen but not encompassed by people.

Concerning the *aḥādīth* of the Prophet (peace be on him) and statements of the Companions that suggest beatific vision, they are *mutawātir*.[130] The compilers of the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Musnad* and *Sunan* collections have recorded them. Consider the following examples.

Abū Hurayrah narrated that some people asked the Messenger of Allah, "Will we see our Lord on the Day of Judgment?" He answered, "Does it hurt you when you see the full moon?" They said, "No, Messenger of Allah." He then said "Is it difficult for you to see the sun on a cloudless day?" They said, "No, Messenger of Allah." He then said, "You will see Him in the same way." Al-Bukhārī and Muslim recorded this *ḥadīth* with its full text.[131] They have also recorded a similar *ḥadīth* from Abū Sa'īd Al-Khudrī.[132]

Jarīr Ibn 'Abdullah Al-Bajalī said, "We were sitting with the Prophet (peace be on him) and he looked to the moon of the fourteenth night (a full moon). Then he said, 'You will see your Lord with your eyes just as you see this (moon). You will not have

---

[130]See Ibn Al-Qayyīm, *Ḥādī al-Arwāḥ ilā Bilād al-Afrāḥ* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmīyyah, n.d.), p. 205.

[131]Al-Bukhārī, *At-Tawḥīd*, 7437; Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 182; Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4730; At-Tirmidhī, *Ṣifat al-Jannah*, 2560; Aḥmad, 2:275, 293, 368, 524.

[132]Al-Bukhārī, 7439; Muslim, 183; Ibn Khūzaymah, *Kitāb at-Tawḥīd*, p. 169, 172, 173; Al-Lalkā'ī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 818.

to trouble each other in trying to see Him." This *ḥadīth* was also recorded by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.[133]

The *ḥadīth* of Ṣuhayb mentioned earlier was recorded by Muslim and others.[134]

In another *ḥadīth*, Abū Mūsā narrated that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "There will be two gardens of silver there (in Paradise), where everything including the utensils will be of silver. And there will be two gardens of gold, where everything including the utensils will be of gold. Nothing will be there to restrain the faithful from seeing their Lord, the Most Blessed and Most High, in the Gardens of Everlasting Bliss except a cloak of glory over His countenance." This was recorded by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.[135]

'Adīy Ibn Ḥātim narrated that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "You will certainly meet Allah on the Day you will meet Him. There will be no veil between you and Him, nor an interpreter to interpret. He will say, 'Did I not send you a messenger to deliver My message? You will answer, 'Yes, O Lord. He will say, 'Did I not give you riches and honor you? And you will say, 'Yes, O Lord....'" This *ḥadīth* was recorded by Al-Bukhārī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*.[136]

About thirty Companions[137] have related the *ḥadīth* of beatific vision. Anyone who studies them will know with certainty that the Messenger (peace be upon him) said them. If I had not laid down the condition of being brief in this work, I would have quoted them all; however, anyone who wants to know this subject thoroughly is advised to study them. In addition to the vision of Allah, they also tell of Allah speaking to whom He likes, that He will come to judge the creatures on the Day of Judgment, that He is above the worlds, that He will call them with a voice everyone at a distance will hear, like one who is close, that He will appear (*tajallā*), that He will

---

[133]Al-Bukhārī, 554, 573, 4851, 7434, 7435, 7436; Muslim, *Al-Masājid,* 633; Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4729; At-Tirmidhī, *Ṣifat al-Jannah*, 2554; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Muqaddamah*, 177; Aḥmad, 4:360, 362, 365.

[134]Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 81; At-Tirmidhī, 2555, 3104; Ibn Mājah, 187; Aḥmad, 4:332, 333. The wording of the *ḥadīth* quoted earlier was that of Ibn Mājah.

[135]Al-Bukhārī, 4878, 4880, 7444; Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 180; At-Tirmidhī, *Ṣifat al-Jannah*, 2530; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Muqaddamah*, 186; Al-Lalkā'ī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 834.

[136]Al-Bukhārī, 1413, 3595; Muslim, 1016, 67; At-Tirmidhī, 2415; Ibn Mājah, 185; Aḥmad, 4:256, 377.

[137]See Ibn Kathīr, *Kitāb an-Nihāyah*, Muḥammad Az-Zaynī, ed. (Dār al-Kutub al-Ḥadithah, 1389/1969), vol. 2, pp. 300-303; Al-Ājurī, *Ash-Shari'ah*, Muḥammad Hāmid Al-Fiqī, ed. (Cairo: Maṭba'at as-Sunnah al-Muḥammadīyyah, 1369/1950), pp. 264-270; Al-Lalkā'ī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 3:470-499.

laugh, and so on. All this surely strikes the Jahmīyyah and Mu'tazilah like a lightning bolt.

How can one know the principles of the religion of Islam from sources other than the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger? And how can one interpret the Book of Allah in a way other than how His Messenger and the Companions of His Messenger, in whose language the Qur'ān was revealed, explained it? The Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Whoever comments on the Qur'ān simply on the basis of his opinion will take his own seat in the Hell-fire."[138] In another version of the *ḥadīth*, the wording is, "Whoever comments on the Qur'ān without knowledge will take his own seat in the Hell-fire."[139] Abū Bakr was asked about the meaning of *abb* in the verse, "*fakihatan wa abban*" [80:31], and he replied, "If I say anything with regard to the Qur'ān that I do not properly know, what heaven will protect me and what earth would hold me?"

To liken the sight of Allah to the sight of the sun or the moon is not making a likening to Allah; it is simply comparing one with another and not one object with another object. But it contains proof that Allah is above His creation; otherwise, how can one see something without facing it? Anyone who says that we will see Allah but He will not be in any direction should ask himself whether he is not contradicting his reason or if he has something wrong with his ability to reason; otherwise, if he says that Allah will be seen but not in front, behind, to the right, to the left, above or below the viewer, everyone who has unbiased reasoning will refute him.

This is why the Mu'tazilah insist that anyone who denies that Allah is above the world must also deny that He may be seen. They say, "How can it be that He is seen without any direction."

We do not see Him in this life because our vision is not capable of that, not because He cannot be seen. If someone tries to see the sun, he cannot, but not because it cannot be seen but because our eyes are too weak. In the Hereafter, Allah will strengthen the sight

---

[138]At-Tirmidhī, At-*Tafsīr*, 2952; *Tafsīr Aṭ-Ṭabarī* [Ibn Jarīr Aṭ-Ṭabari's commentary on the Qur'ān edited under this title by Maḥmūd Muḥammad Shākīr and Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākīr (Cairo: Dār Al-Ma'ārif, 2nd ed., n.d. The *aḥādīth* mentioned by Ibn Jarīr have been numbered in this edition. Henceforth, this edition will be referred to as *Tafsīr Aṭ-Ṭabarī* and the *aḥādīth* will be mentioned by their numbers), *ḥadīth* no. 73, 74, 75, 76 and 77. The chain of this *ḥadīth* contains 'Abdul-A'lā Ibn 'Amīr Ath-Tha'labī, who is weak.

[139]At-Tirmidhī, At-*Tafsīr*, 2951; Aḥmad, 233, 269, 323, 327. This *ḥadīth* also contains the same weak narrator as the previous narration.

of humans such that they will be able to see Him. That is why, when Allah manifested Himself, "Moses fell down senseless. And when he came to, he said, 'Glory unto You! I turn to You repentant, and I am the first of (true) Believers'" [7:143], because no living being can see You except that he will die. No lifeless being faces You but does tumble down. Similarly, human beings cannot see angels in their true forms, save for those whom Allah helps to do so, such as when He helped our Prophet (peace be upon him) to do so.

Allah says, "They say: 'Why is an angel not sent down to him?' If We did send an angel, the matter would be settled at once" [6:8). More than one of the pious Elders stated while commenting on this verse, "They are not able to see an angel in his real form. If He were to send them an angel, He would make him in human form. Then it would be confusing to them: is he human or an angel? It is, therefore, from the complete blessings of Allah upon us that he sent a messenger to us from among our own kind."

The Mu'tazilah could not force them to accept that proposition until they made them agree that Allah is neither inside the world nor outside it. But the statement of one who says that He is there and can be seen but not in any direction is closer to sound reasoning than the statement of one who says that He exists by Himself but He is not anywhere nor can He be seen.

One can counter the argument of those who deny the vision of Allah, because it implies that Allah is located somewhere, in the following manner. What is meant by direction? Is it a being or a non-being? If you mean by it a being, then your argument is that what is not in some being cannot be seen. But this premise is not proven; in fact, it is a false argument, for the surface of the world can be seen even though it is not in another world. If you say that it is a non-being, then the minor premise of your argument is not true, for we do not accept that Allah is not somewhere in that sense.

How can one talk about the basis of the religion when one is not taking his thoughts from the Book and the Sunnah, but instead is deriving them from the statement of a human being; or if one claims that he is taking it from the Book of Allah but does not take the explanation of the Book of Allah from the *ḥadīth* of the Messenger, nor looks to them or to what the Companions and their followers stated that have been narrated to us through trustworthy transmission? Those people did not just transmit the wording of the Qur'ān; they transmitted both its wording and its meaning. They did not learn the Qur'ān as a child learns it; instead, they learned it with its meaning. Whoever does not follow their methodology, but speaks only from his own opinion, and whoever speaks according

to his opinion or what he thinks is Allah's religion, without taking it from the Book and the Sunnah, is a sinner, even if what he says is correct. But whoever takes his statements from the Book and the Sunnah is to be rewarded even if he makes a mistake; though if he is correct, his reward is to be doubled.

And the author said, "The seeing of Allah by the people of Paradise is factual." It seems that he is limiting the seeing to the people of Paradise and denying it for others. There is no doubt that the people of Paradise will see their Lord in Paradise. Similarly, they will see Him when the people are gathered before they enter Paradise. That is confirmed in the two *Ṣaḥīḥ*s by the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him).[140] The following verse also points to that, "The salutation on the Day they will meet Him will be 'Peace'" [33:44]. There is a difference of opinion concerning the seeing by the people who are gathered on the Day of Judgment. There are three opinions on this matter:

1) Only the Believers will see Him.
2) All the people will see Him, Believers and disbelievers, but then He will be veiled from the disbelievers and they will never see Him again after that.
3) Along with the Believers, the hypocrites will also see Him, but not the other unbelievers.

There is a similar difference of opinion concerning those whom Allah will speak to on the Day of Judgment.

The *ummah* has agreed that no one can see Allah with his eyes in this world. There is no dispute over this question except for the case of the Prophet (peace be upon him) alone. Some people deny that he saw Allah with his eyes, while others affirm his seeing. Qāḍī 'Ayāḍ discussed in his book, *Ash-Shifā*, the difference of opinion among the Companions and later scholars concerning this topic. He mentioned that the Prophet's wife, 'Ā'ishah, denied that he had seen Allah with his eyes. She told Masruq, when he had asked her, "Did Muḥammad (peace be upon him) see his Lord?" She said, "My hair stands on end from what you have said." Then she said, "Whoever tells you that Muḥammad saw his Lord has truly stated a falsehood."[141] 'Ayāḍ states, "Many people hold the same view as 'Ā'isha. It is the well-known opinion of Ibn Mas'ūd and Abū Hurayrah, although the latter has been reported to have affirmed the opposite. The opinion that the Prophet did not see Allah and that no

---

[140]Such *aḥādīth* were presented earlier in this section.

[141]Al-Bukhārī, 4855, 7380; Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 177; At-Tirmidhī, 3068, 3228; and Aḥmad, 6:49-50.

one can see Him in this life is held by a number of scholars of *ḥadīth*, jurists and theologians. It is recorded from Ibn 'Abbās that he said that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did see his Lord with his eyes.[142] But 'Ata' narrated from him that he said he saw Him with his heart.[143] Concerning whether the Prophet (peace be upon him) saw Him with his eyes, there is nothing definitive nor is there a clear text. People have referred to the two verses of Sūrat An-Najm concerning this matter. But what they state is debatable and may be cited for either view. As for the *aḥādīth*, there is nothing clear or definitive in them."[144]

The above is what Qāḍī 'Ayāḍ has stated and it is the truth. In principle, the seeing of Allah in this life is not ruled out. If it were impossible, Moses would not have requested it. But there is no clear text that states that the Prophet saw Him with his eyes. In fact, there are some narrations that show that he did not see Him. For example, Muslim recorded in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* from Abū Dharr, who said, "I asked the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), 'Did you see your Lord?' and he said, 'He is Light; how could I see him?"[145]

And another narration states, "I saw light." Muslim also recorded a *ḥadīth* from Abū Mūsā Al-Ash'arī who said, "The Prophet (peace be upon him) addressed us and told us five things: Truly Allah does not sleep, nor does it behoove Him to sleep; He fixes everyone's share, large or small; the deeds of the night are raised before Him before the deeds of the day; and the deeds of the day are raised to Him before the deeds of the night; and His veil is light - and in one narration "fire". And if He were to remove it, the splendor of His countenance would burn everything that His eyes would fall upon."[146] Therefore, and Allah knows best, the meaning of his statement to Abū Dharr, "I saw light," means he saw the veil. Furthermore, the statement, "He is light; how could I see Him?" means that the light which is His veil prevented him from seeing Allah. That is, "How could I see Him when the light of the

---

[142]Al-Bukhārī, 4176; At-Tirmidhī, 3134.

[143]Muslim, 176; At-Tirmidhī, 3281; Al-Lalkā'ī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 910-911.

[144]Qāḍī 'Ayāḍ, *Ash-Shifā fī Ta'rīf Ḥuqūq Al-Muṣṭafa* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmīyyah, n.d.), pp. 195-202.

[145]Muslim, 178. The words in Aḥmad, 5:147, are, "I saw Him as a light; how could I have seen Him?"

[146]Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 179; Ibn Mājah, 195; Ibn Ḥibban, 266; Al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Asmā' wa aṣ-Ṣiffāt*, op cit., pp. 180-181; Ibn Mundah, *Al-Īmān* ('Alī Ibn Muḥammad Al-Faqihī, ed.; Madinah: Islamic University Press, 1st edition, 1401/1981), *ḥadīth* no. 775, 776, 777, 778, 779.

veil was between me and Him preventing me from seeing Him." That is explicit concerning the negation of his seeing. And Allah knows best. 'Uthmān Ibn Sa'īd Ad-Dārimī relates the agreement of the Companions on this point.

It is more important to us to affirm his seeing of Gabriel than his seeing of his Lord, because although the seeing of his Lord is much greater and exalted, his position as prophet does not rest upon that seeing whatsoever.

Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī has stated, "without their vision being all-encompassing and without the manner of their vision being known," that is, because of His complete majesty and sublimity, eyes will see Him but will not be able to grasp or encompass Him, just as one can know Him but cannot grasp Him. Allah says, "No vision will grasp Him" [6:103]; and, "They will not encompass Him with their knowledge" [20:110].

As for his statement, "The explanation of this is as Allah wills and according to His knowledge... We do not try to interpret his words according to our opinions and imaginations," that is, as the Mu'tazilah have done with the texts of the Book and the Sunnah concerning visions of Him. They have distorted the words of Allah and the words of His Messenger. The correct interpretation is what is in accordance with what is in the Sunnah; and the incorrect interpretation contradicts it. The interpretation which is not supported by the context or suggested by evidence found in the text cannot be the intention of its Speaker, Who knows how to express His words clearly and wants to guide people. Had He meant something which is not apparent from the words, He would have put some clues in the text to indicate their meaning, so that nobody would be misled or confused. Allah has said that His words are clear, precise and full of guidance. But if He means something which is not apparent from His words, or puts in something that may indicate that He means other than what comes easily to every mind, His language cannot be said to be clear and precise. The purpose of interpretation is not to suggest something new but to expose what the author meant by his words.

Many people miss this point. Interpretation is an effort to understand the intention of the speaker in his words. When you say, "This is the meaning of the words," you are saying that this is the meaning that the speaker had in mind. If it does not correspond to what the speaker meant, you are wrongly imputing something to the speaker.

The intent of the speaker may be known through different means:

1) He may explicitly state his meaning.

2) He may use words whose meanings are well known and avoid saying anything that may suggest that he does not mean their meanings. This is strengthened by adjoining the words to statements that make what he is saying abundantly clear. Allah's saying, "God spoke to Moses directly" [4:163], and, "You will see your Lord with open eyes as you see the sun at noon when there are no clouds,"[147] are so clear that anyone who hears them will know what the speaker means by them. If he states what the speaker means, and what his words clearly state and imply, and what other evidence further support, he tells the truth. But if he interprets the words to mean what they do not imply, and what is not indicated by other evidence, his claim that what he is saying is what the speaker means is false; it is nothing but a subjective interpretation or wishful imagining.

The fact is that if someone says,, "We interpret it this way," or "We construe it this way," he is giving the word a meaning different from what has been intended. If an opponent objects to his interpretation, and he fails to meet his objection, he will say, as people generally do, "I have understood the word in a non-literal sense."

Someone might say, "But the interpretation has another meaning that you have not mentioned." That is, if a word cannot be taken in its literal sense, it cannot be regarded as meaningless; rather, we take the word in its metaphorical sense, that is, in a sense it implies but not what it originally meant. The response is that when you say that this is what the word means, you are stating that this is what the speaker intends by it. That may be either correct or incorrect, as was stated earlier. It is obviously impossible for the speaker to intend something which is contradictory to the real and apparent meaning of his words and not make it clear to his listeners that that is what he means.

Furthermore, (this probability is even less probable when) he chooses language which underlines that the apparent meaning is intended. We do not deny that a speaker may not intend what his words mean literally, but this happens when the speaker deliberately wants to be vague or wants to confuse the listener. But we do not accept that he would mean the opposite of what he said when at the same time he was intending to be clear and manifest and have his intent understood. This would be all the more unacceptable if he went on strengthening the apparent meaning of his words by

---

[147]A *ḥadīth* in the same sense occurs in Al-Bukhārī, 4581; Muslim, 183.

including words that precluded a metaphorical interpretation and he did so repeatedly and even used similes.

Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī has said, "No one is safe in his faith unless he submits completely to Allah (to Whom belongs glory and greatness) and His Messenger (peace be on him) and entrusts the knowledge of things that are ambiguous to one who knows them." That is, one should submit to the texts of the Qur'ān and Sunnah and refrain from raising doubts and making wrong interpretations. One should avoid saying that reason contradicts this or that narration, or that reason should be allowed to prevail when narrations conflict with it, as reason is the basis of narrated reports and if there is any contradiction between them reason takes precedence. Actually, that would never occur, but it may seem to some people that it occurs. If there seems to be a conflict between reason and a narration, and the tradition is authentic, then what is claimed to be rationally true is definitely not true. If the person investigated the matter, that would be made clear to him. On the other hand, if the tradition is not authentic, there is no question of conflict. In fact, it is inconceivable that there could be a conflict between rational truth and an authentic tradition.

The maxim, "whenever there is a conflict between reason and tradition, reason should be allowed to prevail," is not true. When there is a contradiction between the two, we cannot affirm both of them, nor can we disregard both of them, for one of the contraries must be true. Nor can we prefer reason over the traditions, for reason has demonstrated the validity of the traditions and has proven the necessity of accepting the words of the Prophet (peace be upon him). If we reject the narrated reports, we reject the conclusion of reason. If we reject the conclusions of reason, then it cannot be accepted as something that can contradict the narrated reports, because what is not evidence cannot contradict anything. Hence, preferring reason leads to not preferring it. Hence, it is not permissible to consider it superior. It is reason that points out the truthfulness and correctness of what has been transmitted (*samī'*). The state of what has been transmitted must be in accordance with what has been proven by reason. If it is permissible for the guide to it to be incorrect, the transmitted evidence will be considered incorrect. Therefore, reason must be a correct guide and evidence. If it were not so, it could not be followed in any case, not to speak of putting it prior to transmitted reports. In that case, putting reason before transmitted reports then becomes an insult to reason itself.[148]

[148]That is, since reason is the thing that has proven that transmitted reports take

One must submit completely to the Messenger (peace be upon him), fulfill his commands, believe in his words and bear witness to their truth, without opposing them as untrue or doubtful based on false reasoning called rational truths, or prefer over them erroneous concepts that the human mind has spun. One should submit only to his authority, obey only his commands, and believe only in him in the same way that one must worship only his Sender and surrender to Him alone, looking only to His mercy and putting one's trust only in Him.

These are two aspects of *tawḥīd* and the person will not be saved from the Hell-fire unless he possesses both of them: the belief in the oneness of the Sender and belief in the distinctive following of the Messenger. One should not appeal to any other authority nor accept any other rule. One must not make compliance with his commands or belief in his words contingent on one's agreement with the teachings of his teacher, mentor, *imām*, group or sect that he respects. One should not say that one will believe in his words only when these people approve of them – as then he would actually be submitting to them – or ignore his words and commands, or change their meanings under the guise of interpretation. It is far better to meet Allah with all kinds of sins – save associating partners with Him – than to meet Him in that condition.

When one hears an authentic *ḥadīth*, he should consider it as if he is hearing it from the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself. Is it permissible for him, then, to defer his assent or compliance until he makes sure that is in agreement with the views and the doctrines of some people or sect? Instead, it is incumbent upon him to put his words into action immediately without any hesitation. He must not hesitate to accept it because it contradicts someone else's view; on the contrary, he should refuse to accept anyone else's opinion when it does not agree with the statement of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Neither should he oppose the Prophet's statements with analogies. Let him destroy every analogy and accept the words of the Prophet. Nor may he change the meaning of the Prophet's words to agree with the ideas their protagonists call rational; otherwise, he will be among the ignorant and prevented from what is correct. Assenting to the words of the Prophet (peace be upon him) may never be made contingent upon their agreement with the views of anybody, no matter who that person may be.

Imām Aḥmad said that Anas Ibn Iyādh narrated that Abū Ḥazm narrated on the authority of Amr Ibn Shu'ayb, on the authority of

---

precedence.

his father, from his grandfather, who said, "My brother and I sat in a gathering that was more beloved to me than red camels. When we arrived, we saw that some elder Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) were sitting at one of the doors to his house. We did not like to sit between them and separate them, so we sat in a corner by ourselves. They were discussing a verse of the Qur'ān. The discussion became heated and they raised their voices. The Prophet (peace be upon him) came out in anger. His face was red. He threw dirt at them and said, "Be quiet, people. Because of this peoples before you were destroyed. They differed with their prophets and set one verse of their books against another. Truly, the Qur'ān has not been revealed for one part of it to oppose another, but it was revealed such that one part of it confirms the other. What you know of it, apply it. And concerning what you do not know of it, refer it to one who does know it."[149]

Allah has unequivocally forbidden speech about Him not based on proper knowledge. He says, "Say: The things that my Lord has forbidden are shameful deeds, open or secret, sins and trespasses against truth, associating partners with Allah for whom He has given no authority, and to say things about Allah of which you have no knowledge" [7:33]. Allah also says, "Follow not that whereof you have no knowledge" [17:36]. The servant of Allah must consider what Allah sent His messengers with and what He revealed in His books as the truth that he must follow. He must believe that it is the truth and correct. The statements of the rest of mankind are to be compared in their light. If such statements are in agreement with what they say, they are true; if they differ from what the prophets and revealed books say, they are false. If one is not certain whether they are in agreement or disagreement, as perhaps the meaning of the statement of a person is ambiguous or if one understands the meaning but does not know if the Messenger said anything that may confirm or deny it, then he must hesitate and not speak without knowledge. Knowledge is what is confirmed by evidence. Beneficial knowledge is what the Messenger (peace be upon him) brought. It is true that there is some knowledge that the Messenger did not convey but is related to the matters of this world, such as medicine, mathematics and agriculture. But as for matters related to

---

[149]Aḥmad, 2:181, 185, 195, 196; 'Abdur-Razzāq As-San'ānī, *Al-Muṣannaf*, Ḥabīb Ar-Raḥmān Al-Azamī, ed. (Beirut: Al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1392/1972), *ḥadīth* no. 20367; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Muqaddamah*, 25. Its chain is *ḥasan*. Muslim, *Al-'Ilm*, 2666, is similar to it.

the divine and to religion, that knowledge is to be taken from the Messenger and no one else.

(39) The foundation of Islam is not made firm except with the support of unreserved assent and submission to Allah.

This statement is an example of a metaphor. The physical foot is not made firm unless it is supported by something. What he means to say is that Islam is not confirmed for one who does not submit to the words of the two revelations (the Qur'ān and Sunnah), does not bow to their commands without questioning their wisdom or does not oppose them with one's one ideas or views. Al-Bukhārī recorded that Imām Muḥammad Ibn Shihāb Az-Zuhrī said, "The message comes from Allah. It is the responsibility of the Messenger (peace be upon him) to convey the message, and it is encumbent upon us to submit to it." This is a concise, encompassing statement on this matter.

The best simile given concerning human reasoning and the transmitted texts is the following. Human reason, with respect to the transmitted texts, is like an ignorant, common follower compared to the scholar who can make *ijtihād*. In fact, it is much less than that because it is possible for the commoner to become a scholar but it is not possible for the scholar to become a messenger-prophet. If the common follower knows of a scholar and directs another commoner to him, and then the scholar and the commoner who pointed him out differ about a matter, the second commoner who asked the question must follow the statement of the scholar and not the statement of the one who pointed him out to him. If the commoner who pointed him out were to say, "The correct opinion is mine and not that of the scholar because I am the source for your knowledge of the scholar. If you take his statement over mine, you are disparaging the source by which you knew he was a scholar. Therefore, the reproach must be in the secondary matter (the scholar)." The commoner who asked the question should tell him, "When you bore witness that he was a scholar and pointed him out, you bore witness that he is to be followed and not you. Therefore, my following you in that knowledge was for something particular; it does not mean that I have to agree with you on everything. And your mistake in your disagreement with the scholar, who is more knowledgeable than you, does not necessarily mean that you were mistaken in your knowledge that he is a scholar." That is even given the fact that he knows that the scholar is capable of making a mistake.

Human reason testifies that the Prophet (peace be upon him) cannot make a mistake when it comes to communicating Allah's message. It is not permissible for him to make a mistake in that area. Therefore, what he says must be submitted to, accepted completely and put into practice. We know, as an obligation from the religion of Islam, that if a man were to say to the Messenger, "This Qur'ān that you are reciting to us and the wisdom that you have come with contain lots of things that contradict what we know with our minds. We know with our knowledge your sincerity and honesty by our reasoning. If we accepted everything that you say while it contradicts what our mind says, that would be disparaging our knowledge with which we confirm what you say. Therefore, we believe that there is some contradiction in your words and we turn away from them and do not accept them as guidance or knowledge," that man would not be a Believer in what the Messenger brought and the Messenger would not accept that from him. In fact, if that were permissible, then anyone could disbelieve in anything that the Prophet (peace be upon him) brought. Minds are of different levels and lots of doubts exist. Devils continue to cast suspicions into people. Therefore, everyone could say something like the above concerning what the Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded or said.

But Allah says, "The Messenger's duty is only to communicate the message clearly" [24:54]; and, "What is the mission of the messengers but to communicate the message clearly" [16:35]. Also, "We sent not a messenger except to teach in the language of his people, in order to make things clear to them. Now Allah leaves astray those whom He pleases, and guides whom He pleases" [14:4]; "There has come to you from Allah a light and a perspicuous Book" [5:17]; "*Ḥā Mīm*. By the Book that makes things clear" [44:1-2]; "These are the verses of the perspicuous Book" [12:1]; "It is not a tale invented, but a confirmation of what went before it, a detailed exposition of all things, and a Guide and a Mercy to any such as believe" [12:111]; "We have sent down to you the Book explaining all things, a Guide and a Mercy, and glad tidings to Muslims" [16:89]. There are many more verses of this nature in the Qur'ān.

Concerning belief in Allah and the Hereafter, either the Messenger spoke what demonstrates the truth, or he did not. The latter is ruled out. If he spoke what leads to the truth while using terms that are not clear or are ambiguous, he would not have conveyed the message clearly. But the best of all generations have witnessed that he did convey the message. Allah, too, has borne witness against them in a great place. Therefore, whoever claims

that the Prophet did not convey the message clearly in matters related to the basics of the religion has made a false accusation against the Prophet (peace be upon him).

(40) He Who seeks knowledge that has been barred from him, and whose intellect is not prepared to surrender, will be veiled from a pure understanding of Allah's unity, clear knowledge and correct faith.

This is an elaboration of the earlier point along with a warning that one should not discuss the principles of the faith or any other aspect of the religion without proper knowledge. Allah says, "Pursue not that of which you have no knowledge; for every act of hearing, seeing or feeling in the heart will be asked about (on the Day of Reckoning)" [17:36]; "Yet among men there are such as dispute about Allah without knowledge, and follow every evil one obstinate in rebellion. About the evil one it is decreed that whoever turns to him for friendship, he will lead him astray and guide him to the penalty of the Fire" [22:2-3]; "And yet, there is among men such a one who disputes about Allah, without knowledge, without Guidance and without a Book of Enlightenment, disdainfully bending his side in order to lead men astray from the path of Allah. For him is disgrace in this life, and on the Day of Judgment, We will make him taste the penalty of the burning Fire" [22:8-9]; "And who is more astray than one who follows his own lusts devoid of guidance from Allah? For Allah guides not people given to wrong-doing" [28:60]; and, "They follow nothing but conjecture and what their own souls desire, even though there has already come to them guidance from their Lord" [53:23]. And there are other verses that point to the same meaning.

Abū Umāmah Al-Bahilī narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "The people who have the guidance of Allah do not stray unless they indulge in intellectual disputation," and then he read the verse, "They set this forth to you only by way of disputation" [43:58]. At-Tirmidhī recorded this *ḥadīth* and called it *hasan* (good).[150]

'Ā'ishah narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "The most detestable people in the sight of Allah are those

[150] At-Tirmidhī, At-*Tafsīr*, 3250; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Muqaddamah*, 48; Aḥmad, 5:252, 256; At-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr*, 8067. At-Tirmidhī rated the *ḥadīth ḥasan*, and Al-Ḥakīm called it *ṣaḥīḥ*. (See *Al-Mustadrak*, 2:447-448.)

who dispute and quarrel." This was recorded in the two *Ṣaḥīḥ*s (of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim).[151]

No doubt, anyone who does not submit completely to the Messenger has some shortcoming in his *tawḥīd*, as he speaks according to his own opinion and desires or he follows somebody else's opinion or desire rather than the guidance from Allah. The shortcoming in his *tawḥīd* is by the same amount that he departs from what the Messenger brought. In those matters, he has taken a god other than Allah. Allah says, "Do you see such a one who takes for his god his own desires and impulses?" [25:43]. That is, he is a servant to what his own soul desires.

Truly evil has spread in this world from three main groups of people. As 'Abdullah Ibn Al-Mubārak said:

> Sin, I know, kills the heart,
> and its perpetuation defiles man.
> Avoid sin, you will revive the heart,
> Defy the self, you will secure happiness.
> Three people destroy religion:
> kings, corrupt theologians and monks.

Evil rulers dishonor the Shari'ah by pursuing wrong policies and replacing its just laws with their own, unjust regulations. They prefer them to the rule of Allah and His Messenger. Corrupt theologians – they are the ones that violate the Shari'ah – with their opinions and false logic, they allow what Allah and His Messenger have forbidden and vice-versa, they neglect what the Shari'ah accepts and vice-versa, they make general what the law has made specific and vice-versa, and so on. The monks or hermits are the ignorant Ṣūfis who turn away from the realities of the faith and law. Instead they turn to their mystical experiences, ecstacies, imaginations and Satanic revelations. They construct a religion that Allah has not authorized and they deny His religion that came from the tongue of His Prophet (peace be upon him). They turn away from the realities of faith due to Satanic deception and egotistical desires.

This first group says that if administrative expedience conflicts with the law (*shar'*), administrative expedience takes precedence. And the other groups say that if human reasoning conflicts with what has been transmitted, human reasoning takes precedence. And

---

[151] Al-Bukhārī, Al-Maẓalīm, 2457; At-*Tafsīr*, 4253; *Al-Aḥkām*, 7188; Muslim, *Al-'Ilm*, 2668; At-Tirmidhī, At-*Tafsīr*, 2976; An-Nasā'ī, *Al-Qudat*, 8:248; Aḥmad, 6:55, 62, 205.

the people of mystical experiences say that if there is a conflict between mystical experiences and manifestations and the literal meaning of the law, mystical experiences and manifestations come first

Abū Ḥāmid Al-Ghazālī (may Allah have mercy on him) wrote in his book, *Iḥyā 'Ulūm ad-Dīn*, which is one of his best books or perhaps his best book:

> If you ask if the knowledge of disputation and speculative theology is blameworthy, like astrology, or if it is permissible or recommended, you should know that people have taken extreme positions on this question. Some say that it is heresy and is forbidden. For a servant of Allah to meet Allah having committed every sin except polytheism is better for him than to meet Allah knowing speculative theology. Some say it is obligatory, either upon the community as a whole or upon individuals themselves, and that learning it is one of the best deeds and one of the best ways to get closer to Allah. It is the fulfillment of the science of *tawḥīd* and a defense of Allah's religion. Those who say it is forbidden include Ash-Shāfi'ī, Mālik, Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, Sufyān and the leaders of the scholars of *ḥadīth* from the early predecessors.

After quoting their words extensively, he concludes that there is a consensus of opinion on the subject among the scholars of *ḥadīth* from the Salaf that the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) knew their faith better than anyone else and were most competent to state it, but did not enter into these subjects; they feared that it would lead to evil. The Prophet (peace be upon him) had warned them, "Doomed are those who unnecessarily enter into hairsplitting and unnecessary subtleties."[152]

These scholars also argue that if theological formulations were part of the faith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) would have ordered them first and foremost. He would have shown them the way and would have praised their experts.

Then Al-Ghazālī mentions the rest of their arguments and presents the arguments of the other side. Finally, he says:

> If you ask what my conclusion is I will answer in some detail. There is some benefit and some harm (to such sciences). It may at times be permitted, at times commended, and at times obligatory, just as it may at times be undesirable and at times forbidden. As for its harmful aspects, it creates doubts,

---

[152]Muslim, *Al-'Ilm,* 2670; Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4608; Aḥmad, 1:386.

subjects faith to discussion, removes conviction and offers instead only inconclusive arguments which hardly satisfy people. In addition, it injects harmful beliefs into the mind, builds up emotions in their favor, and leads to insistence on them. This is, however, due to the prejudice that theological controversy generates.

As for the benefits of *kalām* (speculative theology), it is generally believed that it reveals truth and makes us know things as they are, but this is not true. *Kalām* does not deliver that good; it rather conceals and misleads than reveals and guides. If you had heard these same words from a *ḥadīth* scholar or a Hashawī,[153] you could have said that people who do not know a thing usually condemn it. But these are the words of a person who had mastered *kalām* and fathomed its depths, who ranks among its leading exponents, and is no less versed in other disciplines. It is he who is saying that *kalām* does not offer truth. The most that it does is define and analyze issues and work out the implications of different views, but this is rare.[154]

The statements of others like him are clear proofs. The pious predecessors did not disapprove of *kalām* simply because it was new terminology for old truths, like terminologies for other sciences, or because it advanced rational arguments to establish truth and refute untruth. They condemned it because it expounded ideas which are false and contradict the Qur'ān and Sunnah and correct sciences. The road that the theologians take does not lead to truth, and the method they employ is too lengthy and of little use. It is like the meat of an emaciated camel which is placed on top of a trackless mountain that is difficult to climb and in addition not good to secure. If there is anything good in the *kalām*, it has already been stated in the Qur'ān in a far better manner. *Kalām* does nothing more than prolong the discussion or complicate the issue. As a poet once said:

If it were not for the competition for this world,
the books of debate, Al-Mugnī and Al-'Amād would not
have been written
by their claim they are solving difficult questions;
and because of the books that were written,
the problems became even more difficult to solve.

---

[153] The Hashawīyyah are extreme literalists in their understanding of texts, and gross anthropomorphists, attributing a body to Allah.

[154] Al-Ghazālī, Iḥyā *'Ulūm ad-Dīn* (Cairo: Maṭba'at Muṣṭafa Al-Bābī Al-Ḥalabī, 1358/1939), vol. 1, pp. 94-97.

They claim that they resolved doubts and put an end to misconceptions, but anyone familiar with it knows that it only added to them.

It is inconceivable that one cannot reach the truth, guidance, knowledge and certainty in the Book of Allah and the words of His Messenger, yet he can find it in the words of those perplexed theologians. In fact, we must take what Allah and His Messenger stated as the source and beginning point. We must reflect upon and understand their meanings and know their proofs and evidence, whether it be rational or super-rational. We should then consider the supporting or dissenting statements people make, analyze their ideas and ascertain their possible interpretations. Then, what agrees with what the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated we accept; and what does not agree with it we reject.

Kalām operates with a number of terms, such as compound, body, space, substance, dimension, matter, accident, and so on. None of these words occurs in the Qur'ān or Sunnah in the sense in which theologians use them, nor have they been used in those senses in ordinary language; theologians use them in senses different from their common meanings. Hence, it is necessary for them to be explained in common language and then compared with the arguments and concepts that the Qur'ān has advanced. In this way, we will be able to find out what is true in *kalām* and what is false.

Take, for example, the term *tarkīb* (composition). It has many meanings.

First, it may mean to form something out of two or more different things. This is called *tarkīb mazj* (complex composition). An example is an animal being composed of the four elements, having various parts and limbs. It is obvious that composition in this sense is not applicable to Allah. When we ascribe different attributes of perfection, like transcendence, it does not mean that Allah is a composite being in this sense.

Second, composition may mean combining two things by placing them side by side. This is called *tarkīb al-jawār* (joining). An example is the placing of the two parts of a door side by side. For certain, Allah is not a combination of attributes in this sense.

Third, it may mean forming a compound out of particles of the same kind, called atoms.

Fourth, it may be a combination of matter and form, for example, making a ring out of silver, the shape of the ring being its form and silver being its matter. Theologians believe that a body is a

combination of atoms, and they enter into useless discussions about whether atoms combine in twos, fours, sixes, eights or sixteens.

It is clear that composition in these last two meanings does not apply to the attributes of Allah, Who transcends the world. Let it also be clear that a body is not necessarily a combination of atoms, and the definition of the body which theologians give is simply arbitrary. For a detailed discussion of this point, however, one should refer to the relevant works.

Fifth, composition may refer to the combination of essence and attributes. Theologians call this *tarkīb* but they do so only in order to deny Allah's attributes. But in this sense, the term is simply their fabrication; it is not a part of language, nor is it found in the Qur'ān or Sunnah. There is no sanction for this use, and we do not have to accept it. Even if we grant the term and allow them to use it in the context of Allah's attributes, we will say that it is not the word but the meaning which is of importance. You may give it any name you like, but you should realize that the ruling concerning it is not passed on words alone without taking into consideration their meaning. If you want to call milk "wine", it would not be prohibited simply based on that nomenclature.

Sixth, *tarkīb* may refer to a combination of essence and existence. Our mind imagines that they are two different things, but in reality they are not. Can we get essence (dhāt) divested of its existence or existence stripped of its essence? This is impossible. Theologians have debated the question whether the essence of Allah is His existence or different from it and have thus put forward many senseless ideas. The best among them have abstained from saying one thing or the other and have been left skeptical. Many times it is through analysis that erroneous ideas vanish.

Their root cause of error is their turning away from the words of Allah and His Messenger, and their turning to the ideas of the Greeks and other nations. Such people are called *ahl al-kalām* (speculative theologians) because they come up with truths that were not unknown before, or advance ideas which seldom avail, or give a rational demonstration of truths that we can perceive through our senses.

This is not to deny, however, that some of their arguments may be useful, particularly those which they have advanced against the sophists. However, whoever proffers ideas, ignoring the text of the Qur'ān and Sunnah or in opposition to said texts, behaves just like Iblīs, who did not submit to Allah's command. Instead, he said, "I am better than he (Adam); you created me from fire, and him from clay" [7:12]. But Allah says, "He who obeys the Messenger, obeys

Allah; but if anyone turns away, We have not sent you to watch over their (evil) deeds" [4:80]. Allah also says, "Say: If you love Allah, then follow me. Allah will love you and forgive you your sins, for Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful" [3:31]. Also, "But no, by your Lord, they can have no (real) faith until they make you judge in all disputes between them and find in their souls no resistance against your decision, but accept them with the fullest conviction" [4:65]. Allah has thus vowed that they would not be true Muslims until they made the Prophet (peace be upon him) the arbiter, accepted his verdict happily and submitted to him in complete submission.

(41) He sways (*yatadhabdhab*) between faith and disbelief, confirmation and denial, and acceptance and rejection. He will be subject to vain suggestions, perplexed and lost, neither a sincere Believer nor an open denier.

Yatadhabdhab means 'puzzled' and 'undecided'. This is the characteristic of all those who ignore the Qur'ān and Sunnah and indulge in blameworthy *kalām*, or try to combine it with the Qur'ān and Sunnah by interpreting the texts in the light of their views or the views of others whenever there is a conflict between them. In the end, they are confused, lost and full of doubt. Ibn Rushd Al-Hafīẓ, who was one of the most knowledgeable of philosophers, wrote in *Tahāfut at-Tahāfut*, "Who has written anything in metaphysics that is to be treasured?" Al-Āmidī, the top thinker of his time, noted that he could not overcome his doubts on major issues. Al-Ghazālī likewise expressed his dissatisfaction with theology, gave it up and took up the study of *ḥadīth*. At the time of his death, the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Al-Bukhārī was in his hands. Abū 'Abdullah Muḥammad Ibn 'Umar Ar-Rāzī wrote in a book on the varieties of pleasure:

> Reason ends in a blind valley,
> and the philosopher goes nothing but astray.
> Our souls have never been at peace with our bodies,
> We got nothing in the world except unhappiness.
> The best we achieved in our pursuits
> is nothing except "It is said," and "They said."
> How many great men and great nations
> perished and disappeared in no time?
> Many men rose higher than mountains, but
> vanished in the end, while the mountains remained.

Ar-Rāzī also said:

> I have pondered the methods of theology and philosophy. They lead nowhere. The best method is that of the Qur'ān. When it wants to affirm something, it says, for example, "(Allah) the Gracious is firmly established on the Throne" [20:5], or "To Him rise all words of purity" [35:10]. But when it wants to negate something, it says, "There is nothing whatsoever like Him" [35:11], or "They will not encompass Him in their knowledge" [20:110]. Whoever passes through the experience I have passed through will surely come to the same conclusion I have reached.

Abū 'Abdullah Muḥammad Ibn 'Abdul-Karīm Ash-Shahristānī likewise expressed his disappointment with the philosophers and theologians. They get nothing, he said, except bewilderment and remorse. His words are:

> By Allah! I have visited all the academies,
> and seen everyone in these high places.
> But I found none except with his chin
> In his hands in wonder, or gnashing his teeth in regret.

Abū Ma'ālī Al-Juwaynī said, "Friends, avoid *kalām*. Had I known the end *kalām* has brought me to, I would not have engaged in it." At the time of his death, he said, "I entered the deep waters of *kalām* and left the sciences of Islam. People warned me against it. Now, if Allah does not have mercy on Ibn Al-Juwaynī and save him, he is doomed. Let everyone know that I die in the faith of my mother." Another narration says, "in the religion of the old women of Nishapur."

Shams ad-Dīn Al-Khusrushahī, the most distinguished student of Fakhr ad-Dīn Ar-Rāzī, replying to a question from a learned visitor about his faith, said, "I believe in what the rest of the Muslims believe." The questioner further asked, "Are you convinced and fully satisfied with it?" He nodded and said, "I thank Allah for that blessing. By Allah, I do not know what I am to believe. By Allah, I do not know what I am to believe. By Allah, I do not know what I am to believe." And then he cried until his beard was wet.

Ibn Abī Al-Ḥadid, the famous Iraqi litterateur, said:

> O bundle of mistaken views!
> I passed my whole life in your pursuit
> but got naught but bewilderment.

Many have wandered in your valley
And got naught but toil and trouble.
The curse of Allah be on those
who claim they are famous thinkers.
They are surely wrong, and what they claim
They have achieved is beyond the power of man.

On his deathbed, Al-Khunjī said, "The only thing that I learned from my studies is that the possible needs something to bring it into existence. But need is something negative. Woe is me! I am dying, but I have not been able to know anything positive."

Another theologian said, "I lie in bed, put a blanket over my face, and pit one argument against another until dawn. But I never reach a conclusion."

Whoever reaches that state and is not then enveloped in the mercy of Allah must become a heretic. Abū Yūsuf said, "Whoever tries to understand the religion through *kalām* turns into a heretic just as the one who tries to make money through alchemy turns into a pauper, or the one who seeks strange (*gharīb*) *aḥādīth* lands in untruth." Ash-Shāfi'ī said, "In my opinion, the exponents of *kalām* should be flogged with branches and shoes and taken through villages and towns with someone announcing, 'Come and see, this is the punishment for ignoring the Qur'ān and Sunnah and indulging in *kalām*.'" He also said, "I have studied the books of *kalām* and I wonder how a Muslim could utter the things which they contain. It would be far better for a man to meet Allah with everything He has forbidden – with the exception of ascribing partners to Allah – than for him to meet Allah with *kalām*."

One can find many such theologians at the end of their lives returning to the faith of old women, affirming what they believe, and recanting their theological subtleties which conflict with the faith they had used to be so certain about. Afterwards they discovered the falsehood of what they believed or their correctness is not made clear to them. Eventually, they join – if they are saved from punishment – the level of those who follow the people of knowledge, such as children, women and Bedouins.

The remedy for this disease is what the "Physician of the Soul" (peace be on him) used to say when he woke from his sleep to offer his night prayers, "O Allah, Lord of Gabriel, Michael and Israfil, Originator of the heavens and the earth, Knower of the Unseen and the Apparent, You decide between Your servants in their disputes, I beseech You, with Your permission, to show me the truth concerning the matters which people have disputed. It is truly You

Who guides whom You will to the straight path" [recorded by Muslim].[155]

The Prophet (peace be on him) appealed in the name of the Lord of Gabriel, Michael and Israfil to be guided with Allah's permission to the truth in the matters wherein people differ because the true life of the heart is in guidance and these three angels have been entrusted by Allah to look after life. Gabriel is entrusted with the revelation, which is the cause of the life of the heart; Michael is entrusted with the rain, which is the cause of life for every animal and living organism; and Israfil is entrusted with blowing the Horn, which will bring the dead back to life and return the souls to their bodies. Appealing to Allah in the name of these great spirits and guardians of life can have a great effect in ensuring a favorable response. And Allah is the Supporter.

(42) The belief of a person in the seeing of Allah by the people of Paradise is not correct if that person tries to imagine what it is like or if he tries to interpret it according to his own understanding, since the interpretation of this seeing or the meaning of any of the subtle phenomena which are in the realm of Lordship, is by avoiding its interpretation and strictly adhering to submission. This is the faith of Islam. Those who do not refrain from negating Allah's attributes or conceiving them on human patterns are surely mistaken, they are unable to glorify Allah properly.

These words are directed at the Mu'tazilah and their ilk who deny the Beatific Vision, as well as those who conceive of Allah on the pattern of His creatures. The Prophet (peace be on him) said, "You will see your Lord as you see the full moon."[156] Since "as" modifies "you see", the comparison is definitely between the two visions and not the objects seen. So the *ḥadīth* is very clear that Allah will appear in Paradise and people will actually see Him. It leaves nothing left unclear. What could be clearer or more explicit than that? If a *ḥadīth* like this is allowed to be interpreted metaphorically, no text can actually be relied upon. Surely, it cannot be interpreted to mean that men will know their Lord as they know

---

[155]Aḥmad, 6:156; Muslim, *Ṣalāt al-Musafirīn*, 770; Abū Dāwūd, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 776; At-Tirmidhī, *Ad-Da'wāt*, 3416; An-Nasā'ī, *Qiyām al-Layl*, 3:212-213; Ibn Mājah, *Iqāmat aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 1357.

[156]Recorded by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim, and discussed earlier.

the full moon. Some people have argued for this interpretation based on verses like, "Do you not see how your Lord dealt with the People of the Elephant" [105:1], and other verses in which the word *rā'ī* - 'see' has been ascribed to the heart.

To be sure, seeing is sometimes an act of the eye, sometimes it is an act of understanding, and sometimes a type of dream, and so on. But in every case there is something in the language of the statement that makes it clear what kind of seeing is actually meant. If there are no contextual clues as to the intended meaning, the language will be deemed vague and obscure rather than clear and precise. What statement can be clearer than the statement, "You will see your Lord as you see the sun at noon when there are no clouds in the sky"?[157] Can anyone possibly raise the question as to whether these words refer to seeing with the eyes or seeing with the mind? Would anyone waver about the real meaning of this *ḥadīth* except one whose heart has been sealed by Allah?

Some might argue that they resorted to such an interpretation because reason rules out the possibility of seeing Allah. To this we respond: Your claim is rejected by most reasonable people and there is nothing in reason that would reject such an occurrence. Furthermore, if reason were asked about a being that exists by itself but cannot be seen, it would consider that being an impossibility.

The words of the author, "If that person tries to imagine what it is like, or if he tries to interpret it according to his own understanding..." mean that those who first imagine that Allah's vision should have such and such properties, similar to other things, and then confirm such properties that they have imagined, are anthropomorphists. If they deny vision based on those false grounds, they are then negators of Allah's attributes. What they should actually reject is their own image of the Vision and not the Vision itself. One should affirm what is true and negate what is false.

This is the idea which the author wants to convey by the statement, "Those who do not refrain from negating Allah's attributes or conceiving them on human patterns are surely mistaken; they are unable to glorify Allah properly." The Mu'tazilah are under the impression that they are glorifying Allah by rejecting the concept of His Vision. Is it an act of glorification to negate an attribute of perfection? One whose vision is denied does not have the attribute of perfection, for the non-being is also not visible. But perfection is in the affirmation of vision and, at the same time, denial that the vision

---

[157] Aḥmad, 3:16; Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 183; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Muqaddamah*, 179.

is all-encompassing of Him. The same is the case with knowledge. We will not be praising Allah if we say that we cannot know anything of Him. In fact, we will be praising Him if we affirm that we can know Him and at the same time deny that we can fully comprehend Him. Certainly, Allah cannot be encompassed by either vision or knowledge.

The author's words, "Or if he tries to interpret it according to his own understanding," are directed against those who interpret the text in a way other than what it apparently means, or what every Arab would understand from it. Later writers use the term "interpretation" (*ta'wīl*) in this sense. They say that *ta'wīl* is to understand words in a sense different from what they apparently and overtly mean. In this way, they alter the meanings of various texts. They say, "We reinterpret whatever differs from our opinions." They give this distortion (*taḥrīf*) the name *ta'wīl* in order to make it sound appealing and acceptable, but Allah condemns those who try to make falsehood appealing. Allah says, "Likewise did We make for every messenger an enemy, evil ones among men and jinns, inspiring each other with flowery discourses by way of deception" [6:112]. The point is to be taken from the meaning and not the words. Many false ideas have been "proven" in flowery language that actually opposes the true evidence.

The author's words here are similar to his words discussed earlier, "We do not try to interpret His words according to our opinions and imaginations." He stresses the meaning of that statement with his words, "The interpretation of this seeing or the meaning of any of the subtle phenomena which are in the realm of Lordship, is by avoiding its interpretation and strictly adhering to submission. This is the faith of Islam." He is saying here that one must refrain from *ta'wīl* (fanciful interpretation), or what is called interpretation, which is actually distortion of the text. But the author used a polite way to argue with them (so he did not call it distortion), as Allah has stated, "Argue with them in the way that is best" [16:125]. At the same time, though, he is not saying that everything that is termed *ta'wīl* is to be avoided. Nor should one not sometimes abandon the apparent meaning of a text when and if there is some dominating proof for such an action in the Book and the Sunnah. What he means is that one must avoid the false, innovated interpretations that go contrary to the opinions of the pious forefathers, and that the Book and the Sunnah demonstrate to be wrong; and one must avoid speaking about Allah without knowledge. From the fraudulent examples of *ta'wīl* (interpretations) are the interpretations of the evidence concerning Beatific Vision, the evidence concerning Allah's transcendence, the interpretation that

Allah did not speak to Moses and that Allah did not take Abraham as His friend.

In fact, the word *ta'wīl* itself began to be used in a manner other than its original sense. The meaning of *ta'wīl* in the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) is the reality of the thing that the text points to. For example, the *ta'wīl* of an informative statement is the occurrence of the action described; and the *ta'wīl* of a prescriptive statement is the performance of the action prescribed. 'Ā'ishah said, "The Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) used to say during his bowing (in prayer), 'Glory be to You, Allah, our Lord, and praise to You. Allah. Forgive me, in implementation (*yata'awwalu*) of the Qur'ān."[158] Allah also says in the Qur'ān, "Do they just wait for the fulfillment (*ta'wīl*) of the event? On the day the event is finally fulfilled (yatī'tawiluhu) those who disregarded it before will say: 'The messengers of our Lord did indeed bring true (tidings)'" [7:53]. In a similar sense is the notion of *ta'wīl* of a dream or *ta'wīl* of a deed. For example, Allah says, "This is the fulfillment (*ta'wīl*) of my dream I had before" [12:100]; "He will teach you the interpretation (*ta'wīl*) of the stories" [12:6]; "That is the best and most suitable for final determination (*ta'wīl*)" [4:59]; "Now I will tell you the reality (*ta'wīl*) of those things which you were unable to be patient with" [18:78]; and, "Such is the interpretation (*ta'wīl*) of things concerning which you were unable to be patient" [18:8]. Who can deny the existence of those kinds of *ta'wīl* and the knowledge of what is related to command and prohibition from them?

As for informative statements, such as reports about Allah and the Hereafter, no one knows their *ta'wīl*, which is their exact reality. All that is known about them is what they state, but they cannot simply be known by description. If we do not have a prior idea of an object or have not yet experienced something, we cannot know its reality (*ta'wīl*) simply through description. In this sense, the *ta'wīl* of ultimate realities is known only to Allah. But the fact that no one else knows their *ta'wīl* in this sense does not mean that we cannot understand them. There is no verse in the Qur'ān that Allah does not require us to reflect upon. Nor has He revealed a word whose meaning He does not like us to know, although its ultimate

---

[158]She was referring to the verse, "Glorify and praise your Lord, and pray for forgiveness" [110:3]. This was recorded in Aḥmad, 2:230; Al-Bukhārī, 817, 4968; Muslim, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 484; Abū Dāwūd, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 877; Ibn Mājah, *Iqāmat aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 1437; An-Nasā'ī, *Al-Iftitāḥ*, 2:219.

reality is known to none but Him. This is what the word *ta'wīl* means in the Qur'ān, the Sunnah and statements of the Elders, regardless of whether it is in agreement with the apparent meaning of a text or not.

The word *ta'wīl* is used by many commentators on the Qur'ān, such as Ibn Jarīr[159] and others, to mean the exegesis of the passage regardless of whether it is the apparent meaning of the words or not. This is a famous usage of the term. In that case, *ta'wīl* is the same thing as *tafsīr*; what is correct is praised and what is wrong is rejected.

Concerning "No one knows its *ta'wīl* except Allah and those truly grounded in knowledge," [3:7], there are two readings of this verse. One reading stops after the words, "except Allah", and a second reading that does not stop at that point. Both of these readings are correct. What is meant by the first reading are the equivocal verse the knowledge of whose ultimate reality is hidden by Allah. The second reading, however, refers to the relatively unequivocal verses whose meanings the scholars know, which is also their *ta'wīl*.

Those who pause after the words, "except Allah", do not mean by *ta'wīl* the meanings of the words. A necessary consequence of that belief would be that there are some words that Allah revealed to His Messenger whose meanings no one knows, not even the Messenger. The people of knowledge would have no portion of such knowledge and could only say, "We believe in the Book; the whole of it is from our Lord" [3:7]. But this is what any ordinary Believer could say, not just those grounded in knowledge. It is necessary that the people grounded in knowledge be somehow distinguished from laymen. In fact, Ibn 'Abbās said, "I am one of those well-grounded in knowledge who know the *ta'wīl*." He was truthful in that statement, as the Prophet (peace be on him) had prayed for him with these words, "O Allah, let him have a good understanding and insight into faith, and teach him *ta'wīl*" [recorded by Al-Bukhārī and others].[160] And the Prophet's supplication was never not responded to. Mujāhid said, "I recited the Qur'ān to Ibn 'Abbās, from its beginning until its ending, and I stopped after each

---

[159]For the meaning of *ta'wīl* according to Ibn Jarīr, see his *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, vol. vi, p. 201.

[160]The *ḥadīth* in these words have been recorded by Aḥmad, 1:266, 314, 328, 335; and Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr*, 10614, 12506. Only its first sentence occurs in Al-Bukhārī, 143; Al-Baghawī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 3944.

verse and asked him about it." The numerous reports that have come from him show that he commented upon the meaning of the entire Qur'ān and never said about any verse, "This is from the equivocal verses whose meaning no one except Allah knows."

Some colleagues say that the equivocal verses are the separate letters that appear at the beginning of some chapters of the Qur'ān. This has been narrated from Ibn 'Abbās. But many people have spoken about the meanings of those verses. If their meanings are known, they are not equivocal verses; if they are not known, they are equivocal and the rest of the verses' meanings are understood. And that is the desired conclusion.

Furthermore, Allah says, "There are some verses that are unequivocal, those are the foundation of the Book. And others are equivocal" [3:7]. Those letters sitting by themselves are not considered complete verses according to the majority of the scholars who reckon the verses of the Qur'ān.

Ta'wīl in the terminology of the later jurists and theologians means to understand a word in a sense less probable than one more probable for some reason that demands it. It is in this sense that the *ta'wīl* of many verses, informative or prescriptive, have been disputed. Of these interpretations, those which agree with the text of the Qur'ān and Sunnah are correct, and those which disagree with them are wrong. This is discussed in detail in the relevant works. It is mentioned in *At-Tabsirah*[161] that Nāṣir Ibn Yahyā Al-Balkhī narrated on the authority of 'Umar Ibn Ismā'īl Ibn Ḥamād Ibn Abī Ḥanīfah, from Muḥammad Ibn Al-Ḥassan, who was asked about the verses and reports about the attributes of Allah whose literal meanings could lead to anthropomorphism and he said, "We take them as they have come down to us and we believe in them. And we do not say, 'How is that?' 'How is this?'"

One must know that an incorrect, blasphemous meaning cannot be the apparent or implied meaning of a text. If anyone understands it in such a way, it is only because he is deficient in his understanding and has a shortcoming in his knowledge. As it is said concerning the words of some people, "How many times do correct words come from a weak-minded person. But he is destroyed because of his weak understanding." Also, "It is incumbent upon me to take the poems from their places. But it is not my fault if the cow does not understand them.

---

[161]This is probably *Tabṣirah al-Ādillah fī al-Kalām* by Abū Al-Mu'īn Maymūn Ibn Muḥammad An-Nasafī (d. 508/1114].

What could one then say about Allah's statement – and He is the most truthful and best of speech – concerning the Book as "a Book whose verses have been clearly stated and then explained in detail, from One Who is Wise and well-acquainted (with all things)" [11:1]. Those who subject the texts to their own interpretations believe, in fact, that the language of the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* are blasphemous and misleading. They state that the Qur'ān and Sunnah do not clearly state the faith and that they fail to formulate Allah's oneness in terms befitting His majesty. That is the reality of the statements of those who make *ta'wīl.*

The truth is that what the Qur'ān points to is the truth. And it does not prove things that are false. Instead, these misguided people think that the Qur'ānic statements are faulty and should be interpreted in a different manner.

It must be said to these people, "The door that you have opened, although you claim to have been able to defeat some of your brother Muslims in some minor details, is also a door that you have opened to the polytheists and heretics. You do not have the ability to close it. For if you have allowed the twisting of the words of the Qur'ān from how they are understood without any legal evidence for such scripture twisting, then what are the principles that distinguish an acceptable interpretation and a twisting that is not acceptable?"

If you respond to that criticism by saying, "What is definitely proven by reason to be unacceptable, we will reinterpret; others we will accept as they are," Then it must be asked of you, "According to what reason will you measure the definite conclusions of reason?" The Karmatian esoterics claim that their reason has demonstrated that no text can be taken at face value. The philosophers claim that reason contradicts the texts that speak of the resurrection of the body. The Mu'tazilah claim that reason repudiates the Beatific Vision and falsifies His foreknowledge of human acts, as well as His speech and mercy. The door to such interpretations has led to so many claims based on reason that not all of them can be mentioned in this place.

There are two greatly unacceptable consequences of their view. First, we do not accept anything of the meanings of the Book or Sunnah until we research the matter in great detail to determine if reason will accept such a proposition. And every group which diverges from the Book claims that reason points to what they believe in. The matter can only end in nothing but confusion and chaos.

Second, people will lose firm faith in all that the Prophet (peace be on him) said because they will not be certain that the apparent meaning of his speech is what he meant. Furthermore, the

interpretations of his speech are contradictory. This means that we would not be able to know from the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* what the message of Allah is for His people. The mission of the Prophet (peace be on him) was to convey Allah's message, and the Qur'ān is that supreme message. Therefore, we find the people of *ta'wīl* quoting the Qur'ān and Sunnah only to support the views which they have already formed and not to base their views on the Qur'ān. If the Qur'ān and Sunnah are in agreement with what their reason states, they agree with it. If it contradicts what their reason accepts, they reinterpret it. This has opened the door to hypocrisy and heresy. We ask Allah to save us.

(43) Those who do not refrain from nafī (negating the attributes of Allah) and *tashbīh* (imagining Allah's attributes to be like human attributes) go astray and fail to glorify Allah properly.

Negating Allah's attributes (*nafī*) or conceptualizing them to be like human attributes (*tashbīh*) are diseases of the heart. Diseases of the heart are of two kinds: the disease of doubt and the disease of lust. Both have been mentioned in the Qur'ān. Allah says, "Be not too complaisant of speech, lest one in whose heart is a disease should be moved with desire" [33:32]. He has referred to the former in these verses, "In their hearts there is a disease; and Allah has increased their disease" [2:10]; and, "But for those in whose hearts is a disease, it will add only doubt to their doubt" [9:125]. This disease is one of doubt and it is worse than the disease of lust. The latter is cured when the lust is satisfied, but there is no cure for doubt, unless Allah has mercy on the patient and rescues him from it.

Misconceptions concerning the attributes of Allah may lead either to their negation or to anthropomorphism. The former is worse than the latter, for it implies rejecting and falsifying the Prophet's teachings, whereas the latter is to exceed the limits set by the Prophet (peace be on him). To liken Allah's attributes to the attributes of creatures is infidelity, for He has said, "There is nothing like unto Him" [42:11]. But to negate His attributes is also infidelity, for He has said, "He is All-Hearing, All-Seeing" [42:11].

This is one kind of *tashbīh*. *Tashbīh* is actually of two types. One is comparing the Creator with the created. This is the type that the theologians have tried endlessly to refute and falsify. But the people who hold that kind of thought are fewer than the people who believe in the second kind of tashbih, which is to liken the created

with the Creator. This is the case with those who worship Christ, Ezra, the sun, the moon, idols, the angels, fire, water, the calf, the graves, jinns and other things. These are the people to whom the messengers were sent to call them to the worship of Allah alone, with no partners.

(44) For our Lord is qualified with the attributes (ṣifāt) of uniqueness (*waḥdanīyyah*) and the characteristics (*nu'ūt*) of absolute singularity (*fardanīyyah*). No created being shares with Him these attributes.

The author shows that to glorify Allah properly is to deny or affirm the attributes that He has respectively denied or affirmed of Himself. In fact, the author takes these aspects from Sūrat Al-Ikhlāṣ (Purity of Faith) in the Qur'ān. His statement, "For our Lord is qualified with the attributes (ṣifāt) of uniqueness (*waḥdanīyyah*)" is derived from "Say: He is Allah, the One and Unique." And his words, "and the characteristics (nu'ūt) of absolute singularity (*fardanīyyah*)", are taken from "Allah, the Absolute, He begets not, nor is He begotten." The statement, "No created being shares with Him these attributes," is derived from the words, "There is none like unto Him" [112:4].

These words also emphasize the point which the author made previously about affirming the attributes of Allah and denying anthropomorphism. The words *ṣifah* (pl. *ṣifāt*) and *na't* (pl. *nu'ūt*) are synonyms or very close in meaning, where the former qualifies the essence (*dhāt*) and the latter qualifies acts. *Waḥdanīyyah* and *fardanīyyah* have likewise been considered synonymous. Some say that the difference between them is that waḥdanīyyah refers to essence while *fardanīyyah* refers to attributes. Allah, Most High, is one, unique in His essence and singular in His attributes. This is true and there is no difference of opinion concerning it. I, however, feel that there is a kind of redundancy in the words, not only here but at many places. This kind of style is more suitable for sermons and prayers, rather than for a discussion on *tawḥīd*. Moreover, flowery and rhyming prose is more suitable for the former than the latter. The words, "There is nothing like unto Him," that are found in the Qur'ān [42:11] emphasize the glory of Allah better than the words, "No created beings share with Him these attributes," which is stated here.

(45) Allah is supremely exalted above definition of Him or from being restricted, or from needing any parts, limbs or instruments. He is not bound by the six directions of space as all created beings are.

Before commenting on this text, I would like to make a few general remarks. First, people can be divided into three groups on the question of whether terms like those mentioned in the text can be applied to Allah. One group affirms such terms for Allah; another group denies them; a third group, which follows the way of the Elders, calls for more clarification. The third group neither affirms them in general until it is made clear that what is affirmed by such terms is to be affirmed and what is negated by such terms is to be negated. They take this approach because later scholars use such terminology that includes a lot of vagueness and ambiguities, as is the case with other types of terminology. Therefore, not all of them use the same term to mean exactly the same. Hence, anyone who denies it completely denies what is both correct and incorrect without discrimination, and imputes to those who affirm them things that they never said. Some of those who affirm such terms include in their connotations ideas that go against the views of the Elders and conflict with the Qur'ān and Sunnah, or have nothing in them either for or against them. We have not the right to attribute to Allah things that He did not attribute to Himself, nor did His Messenger attribute to Him, either with respect to negation or affirmation. On this point we must be followers and not innovators.

It is necessary to investigate this subject, that is, the subject of attributes, and to attribute to Allah what Allah and His Messenger have affirmed and to negate of Allah what Allah and His Messenger have negated. Adhering to the terms used in the texts (of the Qur'ān and Sunnah) will protect one in matters of affirmation and negation. We affirm what terms and meanings Allah and His Messenger have affirmed; in addition, we negate any terms or meanings that the texts have negated.

As for the terms concerning which there is no explicit affirmation or negation, we do not make any general statement about them until we can determine what is meant by them. If their meanings are correct, we accept them, although it is best to use the terms actually found in the texts (of the Qur'ān and Sunnah) and not use the vague terms unless there is a pressing need to do so. But even then, they must be accompanied by contextual evidence that shows their meanings. For example, one might be speaking to someone who will not be convinced or will not understand except when those terms are employed.

The author has included this passage in order to refute anthropomorphists like Dawūd Al-Jawāribī and others like him who say that Allah is a solid thing or a body with organs. Exalted is He above what they ascribe to Him.

The author is correct in his statement but later, people extended his negation and overstepped the limits. This is in need of further explanation. The Elders are in agreement that man cannot define Allah or His attributes. Abū Dawūd At-Tayālisī said that Sufyān, Shū'bah, Ḥammad Ibn Zayd, Ḥammad Ibn Salāmah, Shurayk and Abū 'Uwānah never tried to define Allah or liken Him to or compare Him with anything. They would simply narrate the *ḥadīth* and refuse to elaborate on the narrations. When pressed, they would only quote a saying of a Companion or a Successor. We will return to this point when discussing the author's words, "He has barred His creatures from comprehending Him." He means that no one can define Allah, and not that Allah is not distinguished from His creation, separate from it, apart from it. 'Abdullah Ibn Al-Mubārak[162] was asked, "How should we think of our Lord?" He said, "Think that He is on the Throne, completely different from His creatures." Someone asked, "Is He different by definition?" He said, "Yes, by definition."

We know that definition sometimes refers to what separates one thing from another and distinguishes it. Since Allah does not reside in any of His creation, nor does He exist by them, but on the contrary He exists by Himself and brings all things into existence and sustains them, no one would object to defining Allah in this sense; otherwise, it would mean denying Allah's existence and essence. But if we understand definition in the sense of comprehending Him as He is and stating it in words, that is impossible.

There is a consensus among the Ahl as-Sunnah on this point. Abū Al-Qāsim Al-Qushayrī says in his *Risālah* that Abū 'Abdur-Raḥmān As-Sulāmī narrated from Abū Mansūr Ibn 'Abdullah, and he from Abū Al-Ḥassan Al-'Anbarī that Sahl Ibn 'Abdullah Aṭ-Ṭustarī, answering a question about the existence of God, said, "Allah's essence is qualified with knowledge. He cannot be encompassed in knowledge, or seen by eyes in this world. He is available to faith, but transcends definition and comprehension, and does not reside in anything. Eyes will see Him in the Hereafter

---

[162]For the quote from 'Abdullah Ibn Al-Mubārak here, see Ad-Dārimī, *Ar-Radd 'alā al-Jahmīyyah* (Damascus: Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmī, 1381/1961), p. 50.

manifested in His power and authority. He has barred creatures from knowing His essence, but has helped them to know Him through His signs. Hence, hearts know Him, but eyes cannot compass Him. The faithful will see Him with their eyes, but encompass Him or scan His majesty they will not."[163]

As for the terms "parts, limbs or instruments", some of the negators used them to deny some attributes that are confirmed by definitive evidence, such as hand and face. Abū Ḥanīfah wrote in *Al-Fiqh al-Akbar*, "Allah has a hand (*yad*), face (*wajh*) and a soul (*nafs*). He has Himself mentioned them in the Qur'ān. They are His attributes, and we must affirm them without inquiring into their nature. We should never say that His hand is power or blessings, as by doing so one nullifies the attribute."[164] What the Imām stated is confirmed by definitive evidence. For example, Allah has said, "What prevents you from prostrating yourself to one whom I have created with My two hands" [38:75]. Also, "On the Day of Judgment the whole of the earth will be but His handful and the heavens will be rolled up in His right hand" [39:67]. Concerning His face, Allah has stated, "Everything (that exists) will perish except His Own countenance" [28:88]; also, "But will abide forever the countenance of your Lord" [55:27]. (Concerning His soul), Allah has stated (quoting Jesus), "You know what is in my soul though I know not what is in Your soul (*nafs*)" [5:116]; and, "Your Lord has inscribed for Himself (*nafsihi*) the rule of mercy" [6:54]; also, "And I have prepared you for Myself (*nafsī*)" [20:41]; and, finally, "But Allah cautions you to remember His soul (*nafsahu*)" [3:28]. The Prophet (peace be on him) stated in the famous *ḥadīth* of intercession, "People will come to Adam and say, 'Allah created you with His hands, commanded the angels to bow to you and taught you the names of all things.'"[165]

It is not correct to say that the dual 'hands' here means 'power' as the words, "whom I have created with My two hands" [38:75] cannot be understood as "whom I have created with My two powers," otherwise Iblīs could have said to Allah, "You had also created me with Your power," so Adam would have no superiority over him. Iblīs – even with his infidelity – knew Allah better than

---

[163] Al-Qushayrī, *Ar-Risālah*, 'Abdul-Halim Al-Maḥmūd and Maḥmūd Ibn Ash-Sharīf, eds. (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Ḥādithah, 1972), p. 585.

[164] *Al-Fiqh al-Akbar*, pp. 58-59.

[165] Part of a long *ḥadīth* on intercession in Al-Bukhārī, 4476, 7516. Also see Al-Bukhārī, 6565; Muslim, 193; Ibn Mājah, 4312.

the Jahmīyyah. Furthermore, there is no evidence for them in the statement of Allah, "Do they not see that it is We Who have created for them – among other things which Our hands have fashioned – cattle, which are under their dominion" [36:71]. Allah has used "hands" in the plural because the genitive pronoun, "Our," whose construct it is, is also plural; both underline the dominion and the majesty of Allah. "Hands" in the plural form has never been used with a singular genitive pronoun, nor has the dual been used with a plural genitive pronoun. Hence, the words, "which Our hands have fashioned" [35:71] cannot be compared with the words, "whom I have created with My two hands" [38:75].

The Prophet (peace be on him) also said about Allah, "His veil is light. If He were to remove it, the splendor of His face would burn every creature His eyes would fall upon."[166]

On the other hand, one does not say about these attributes that they are organs (*a'ḍa*), limbs (*jawāriḥ*), instruments (*adwāt*) or parts (*arkān*, sing. *rukn*). For *rukn* is a part of the essence (*mahīyyah*), and Allah is absolutely one, perfect and indivisible (Al-Aḥad, Aṣ-Ṣamad). Similarly, "organs" gives the impression of division and differentiation. Allah is exalted above that. This is clear in the verse, "who have made the Qur'ān into *'iḍīn* (shreds)" [15:91]. *'Iḍīn* is from the same root as *'adwāt*. *Jawāriḥ* (limbs) implies the idea of acquisition and use. *Adwāt* are the instruments which are used for bringing about some good or preventing some evil. All of those meanings are ruled out with respect to Allah. This is the reason none of these words have been used in reference to Allah (in the Qur'ān or Sunnah). The words used in the text have correct meanings to them. They are free from any kind of confusion or guile. Therefore, one must not use terms other than the ones used in the texts (of the Qur'ān or Sunnah) when it comes to affirming or negating something about Allah; otherwise one may affirm something that is incorrect or negate something which is correct. All of these other terms are vague and can be interpreted in different ways, right as well as wrong.

As for the word *jihah* (direction), it may imply something existent or non-existent. It is well known that there is nothing in existence except the Creator and the created. Hence, if by direction one means an existent other than Allah, it would be something

---

[166]This is a *ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīth* that was discussed earlier. For more on this point, see Ibn Taymīyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, 3:45-46, 6:363-366; and Ibn Al-Qayyīm, *Mukhtasar as-Sawā'iq al-Murṣalāh*, 2:153-174.

created. As such, it could not encompass Allah, for no created being can encompass Him. Exalted is He above that. If by the word "direction" one means something non-existent, that is, beyond the bounds of this world, then there is nothing there except Allah. Taking "direction" in this sense, if we say that Allah is in a certain direction or space, it is correct, for it means that He is above the world, beyond the limits of creation and beyond everything.

Those who negate direction, those who desire by that to deny that Allah is transcendent and above the creation, use as their evidence that all directions and space are created. But Allah must have been before any kind of direction or space. Moreover, if Allah is in a direction or space, it would mean that a part of the world is eternal, or that there was a time when Allah was above space and then entered into it. These arguments are advanced to show that Allah is not in anything created, whether we call it space, direction or anything else. This is true. But the fact is that space is not something existing but it is only a point of view (*amr i'tibārī*). There is no doubt that spaces or directions (*jihāt*) are boundless and what is not in the boundless does not exist.

What the author stated, "He is not bound by the six directions of space as all created beings are," is true in the sense that nothing created can encompass Him. On the contrary, He encompasses all and is above all. This is what the author means by this statement, as later he states, "Allah encompasses all and is above all." When we put these words together with the above sentence, it becomes clear that what he wants to say is that Allah is not surrounded or encompassed by anything, as created beings are; on the contrary, He encompasses everything and is above everything.

But there are two more observations that must be made concerning his statement. First, it would have been better for him to avoid the use of these terms which are general and vague. One could accuse him of making contradictory statements and argue that he affirms that Allah encompasses everything and is above everything, and at the same time he denies that He is above all. However, this charge can easily be repudiated by saying, as we have done, that what he denies is that anything created can encompass Him. (This example shows) that using the wording of the texts (of the Qur'ān and Sunnah) is best.

Second, his statement, "as all created beings are," suggests that all created beings are contained. This is debatable. If he means by that that they are contained by something existing, that is not true, for the world is not contained by another world. If this were not the case, one would then run into an infinite regression. On the other hand, if he means 'bound by something that does not exist,' that too

is not correct. Not everything created is in a non-being. Some things are inside other things, just as the heavens and earth are in the Footstool, and so on. In addition, some things mark the ultimate limit of the created world, such as the Throne. In any case, the world is not in any other created object as otherwise we would not be able to avoid an infinite regression, as we have just stated.

One might respond to this objection by stating that the word *sa'īr* in the words *sa'īr al-mubtada'āt* (as all created beings are) does not mean 'all' but 'the rest' of the created beings, which is the original meaning of the word. *Sa'īr* comes from the same root as *su'r*, which means what is left over from a drink or meal. Hence, the reference here would be 'most of the created things and not all of them,' or 'the majority and not the totality'. Hence, what the author means is that Allah is not bound by anything, as are most of the creation. He is absolutely unbounded. However, we cannot imagine that the author is one of those who say that Allah is neither in the world nor outside of it, as some commentators have suggested. But his meaning is that Allah is too exalted for any of His creatures to encompass Him and too perfect to need anything, be it the Throne or anything else.

It is debatable whether Imām Abū Ḥanīfah ever said these words. His opponents attacked him on much more trivial matters. Had they thought he made a statement like this, they would have openly denounced him and that denunciation would have been known to everyone. On the contrary, Abū Mutī Al-Balkhī narrated that Abū Ḥanīfah confirmed Allah's being above the world, as we will mention later, God willing. But the most apparent meaning of the words mentioned here imply negation of that concept. There is no statement of this nature in either the Book or the Sunnah. For that reason I say that there is some debate as to whether Abū Ḥanīfah actually said it. The best course would be to refrain from saying anything general on this issue. Had it been a matter related to the words stated in the texts of the Qur'ān and Sunnah, such as mounting the Throne (*istiwā*) or coming down (*nuzul*), we could talk about them. Only an ignorant person would say that when Allah comes down to the lowest heaven,[167] as we have in the *ḥadīth*, the

---

[167]Allah's descent has been referred to in various *aḥādīth*. See Al-Bukhārī, 1145, 6321, 7494; Muslim, *Ṣalāt al-Musafirīn*, 758; Abū Dāwūd, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 1315; At-Tirmidhī, *Ad-Da'wāt*, 3493; Ibn Mājah, *Iqāmat aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 1366; Mālik, *Al-Muwaṭṭa* (Muḥammad Fuwād 'Abdul-Baqī, ed., Cairo: 'Isa Al-Ḥalabī, 1370/1951), 1:214; Aḥmad, 2:264, 265, 267, 282, 419, 487, 504; Ad-Dāraquṭnī, *Kitāb an-Nuzul* ('Alī Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Naṣir, ed; Madinah: Al-Faqihī, 1403/1983), pp. 102, 103, 107;

Throne will be above Him and He will be in between the two realms of the universe. This goes against the consensus of the Elders as well as the Qur'ān and the Sunnah.

Furthermore, Shaykh al-Islām Abū 'Uthmān Ismā'īl Ibn 'Abdur-Raḥmān Aṣ-Ṣabūnī wrote that he heard from Abū Mansūr Ibn Hamshadh that Abū Ḥanīfah was asked about the *ḥadīth* that mentions Allah's descending. He replied, "Allah descends in a manner unknown to us."[168]

Those who keep silent on the issue of Allah's transcendence over the world do so because their knowledge of the Qur'ān, the Sunnah and the sayings of the Elders is limited. For that reason, some of them reject the notion that Allah is above the Throne. They say that He is neither above nor beside it, nor inside or outside the world. They thus describe Allah in negative and impossible terms. They decline to predicate of Him what He has predicated of Himself, such as His being above the world or established on the Throne. Others say that He resides in everything. Still others say that He is all that is there, and so on. Far exalted is Allah above all these wild surmises and blasphemous statements. We will, God willing, discuss the transcendence (*'ulu*) of Allah in detail later, while commenting on the author's statement, "He encompasses all and is above all."

(46) The ascension (*mi'rāj*) of the Prophet (peace be on him) is a fact. He was taken in person for a journey by night, and lifted awake and in body to the heavens, and from there to such heights as Allah pleased. Allah showered upon him His favors as He pleased and revealed to him what He liked. His heart did not falsify what his eyes saw. Blessed is he in this life and in the Hereafter.

Mi'raj means a device by which one goes up or ascends. It works like a ladder. Its nature, however, is unknown. We believe in it without inquiring into its nature, as we do with all other transcendental realities. The author has stated, "He was taken for a

---

Al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Asmā' wa aṣ-Ṣifāt*, p. 449; Al-Lalkā'ī, *Sharḥ 'Aqīdat Ahl as-Sunnah*, p. 745. All of the above *aḥādīth* were reported by Abū Hurayrah. For reports from other Companions, see As-Suyūṭī, *Al-Azhar al-Mutanāthirah*, p. 124.

[168]Abū 'Uthmān Ismā'īl Aṣ-Ṣabūnī, *'Aqīdat as-Salaf*, Badr Al-Badr, ed. (Kuwait: Ad-Dār as-Salafīyyah, 1404/1984].

journey by night, and lifted awake and in body to the heavens." However, there are three different views on this subject.

One view is that it was a journey of the soul, but his body was not left behind. This is the view of 'Ā'ishah and Mu'āwīyah (may Allah be pleased with them) as recorded by Ibn Isḥāq. Al-Ḥassan Al-Baṣrī is also reported to have had the same view.

But one must distinguish between the view that the Prophet (peace be on him) was taken for a journey by night while asleep and the view that it was a journey of the soul without the body. There is a great difference between the two. 'Ā'ishah and Mu'āwīyah did not say that the journey was while he was asleep; they only said that he was taken with his soul for a journey in the night though his body was left behind. The difference between the two may be explained as follows. What one sees in sleep is a representation of his thoughts in sensible form. For example, he will see that he is taken up to the heavens or to Makkah, although his soul neither ascends or travels. The angel of dreams produces images for him representing those things. When 'Ā'ishah and Mu'āwīyah said that the nocturnal journey (*isra'*) took place in sleep, what they meant is that the soul went for a journey leaving the body behind and then it returned to it.[169] Thus, they consider this one of the Prophet's special privileges, as no other soul can attain a complete ascent to the heavens except after death.[170]

Another view is that the *isra'* took place twice, once while the Prophet (peace be on him) was awake and once while he was asleep. Those who hold this view try to reconcile the *ḥadīth* narrated by Shurayk in which the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Then I got up from sleep"[171] with other narrations of the *ḥadīth*.

Some say that the *isra'* occurred once before revelation and a second time after revelation commenced. Another view is that it took place three times, once before he received revelations and twice afterwards. It seems that whenever people come across a new *ḥadīth* which they cannot explain, they assume a new event in order to

---

[169]According to Al-Albānī, the narration from 'Ā'ishah and Mu'āwīyah is not authentic, so there is no need to try to give it this interpretation.

[170]Ibn Al-Qayyīm has discussed the issue at length in *Zād al-Ma'ād*, Shu'ayb Al-Arnawūṭ and 'Abdul-Qādir Al-Arnawūṭ, eds. (Beirut: Mū'assassat A*r-Risālah*, n.d.), 3:401.

[171]The words, "Then I got up from sleep," occur only in the narrations of Shurayk and are considered to be one of his mistakes. In his version of the *ḥadīth*, Ibn Ḥajr noted ten features which do not coincide with other versions of the *ḥadīth*. See Ibn Ḥajr, *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, 13:404-405.

harmonize the different narrations. But this sophistry is only uttered by people who are not proficient in *ḥadīth*, for the leading scholars of *ḥadīth* all agree that the isra' took place only once, in Makkah, after the revelations began, one year before the emigration, while others say a year and two months before the emigration, as Ibn 'Abdul-Barr mentioned.

Commenting on this, Shams ad-Dīn Ibn Al-Qayyīm stated, "I wonder how people think that the *isra'* occurred many times. How could it be that they think that Allah would command fifty prayers and the Prophet (peace be on him) would go back and forth between Him and Moses until He reduced them to five and say, 'I have reduced them and made them incumbent on my servants,' and then go over the whole thing again, commanding fifty prayers first and then again reducing them to five! The scholars of *ḥadīth* have noted that Shurayk, who reported such a *ḥadīth* of the *isra'*, was mistaken in his narration. Muslim recorded the best of his narrations and then said, "He has altered the order of things, putting later things earlier and earlier things later, he has also added some things and deleted others. And Muslim did not record his narration and he did well in not doing so."[172]

The *ḥadīth* of *isra'* states that the Prophet (peace be on him) was taken while awake, in body, for a journey by night from the Sacred Mosque in Makkah to the *Bayt al-Maqdis* in Jerusalem. He was riding on Burāq, accompanied by Gabriel. At the *Bayt al-Maqdis*, the Prophet (peace be on him) dismounted, tied Burāq with a ring at the gate of the mosque, and led a prayer during which all the prophets were present. Some say that he dismounted in Bethlehem and led a prayer there, but this is not correct howsoever.

Then the Prophet (peace be on him) was taken from Jerusalem to the first heaven. At the request of Gabriel, the gate was opened and the Prophet (peace be on him) saw Adam, the father of humanity, therein. The Prophet (peace be on him) greeted him. Adam welcomed him and returned his greeting and affirmed his prophethood. He was then taken to the second heaven. Its gate was opened and he saw Yahyā Ibn Zakarīyyā (John) and 'Isa Ibn Maryam (Jesus) therein. He greeted them and they, in return, greeted him and affirmed his prophethood. Then he ascended to the third heaven. Therein he saw Yūsuf (Joseph). He greeted him and his greeting was responded to. Yūsuf welcomed him and also affirmed his prophethood. He then ascended to the fourth heaven.

---

[172]Ibn Al-Qayyīm, *Zādal-Ma'ād*, 3:42.

Therein he saw Idrīs, who greeted the Prophet (peace be on him), welcomed him and affirmed his prophethood. He then was taken to the fifth heaven, wherein he saw Hārūn Ibn 'Imrān (Aaron), who greeted him, welcomed him and affirmed his prophethood.

He then was taken to the sixth heaven wherein he saw Moses. Moses greeted him, welcomed him and affirmed his prophethood. When he left him, Moses cried. It was asked of him, "What makes you cry?" He said, "I cry because I see that the young man who is sent after me will have more followers going to Paradise than I will." Thereafter, the Prophet (peace be on him) was taken to the seventh heaven where he met Abraham and greeted him. Abraham greeted him and affirmed his prophethood. From there he was taken to the sidrat al-muntahā (the lote-tree of the utmost boundary) and then he was shown the *bayt al-ma'mūr* (the much-frequented house).

Then he was taken to the Inaccessible, exalted be His Majesty and Hallowed be His Names. He came close to Him, a distance of two bows or less.[173] Allah revealed to His servant what He pleased. He obligated fifty prayers. Thereafter, the Prophet (peace be on him) returned. When he passed by Moses, Moses asked him about what had been ordained. He told him of the fifty prayers. Moses said that they would be too much for his followers and that he should go back to Allah and request Him to reduce it for his followers. The Prophet (peace be on him) turned to Gabriel as if seeking his advice. He motioned, "Yes, if you wish." So he took him back to Allah, the Mighty, the Most High and Most Holy while He was at the same place – this is the wording of Al-Bukhārī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* and of some of the narrations – and He reduced the amount by ten prayers.

Then he descended until he came to Moses. He informed him of what had happened and he said, "Go back to your Lord and ask for it to be reduced." He continued to go between Moses and Allah, the Blessed and Most High, until the prayers became five in number. Moses told him to go back again and ask for more of a reduction,

---

[173]This sentence, too, is part of the *ḥadīth* reported by Shurayk and is one of his mistakes. The commentator should have pointed this out. Al-Khaṭṭābī observed that the *ḥadīth* has been narrated through channels other than Shurayk, but these words do not occur in them. Ibn Kathīr said that Shurayk mixed things up in narrating the *ḥadīth* and added words that did not occur in the *ḥadīth* reported by others. Ibn Kathīr also quoted the remarks of Al-Bayhāqī that the words, "He came closer...", as they occur in the Qur'ān (53:8), refer to Gabriel, not Allah. This is agreed upon by all the commentators of the Qur'ān, but here Shurayk quotes them in the wrong context. See Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*, (Beirut: Dār Al-Ma'rifah, 1405/1984), 3:3.

but the Prophet (peace be on him) then said, "I have now become shy of my Lord, but I am pleased and I submit." At that point, there was an announcement, "I have fully ordained what I wanted to make obligatory and I have reduced the burden on my servants."[174]

I mentioned earlier that there is a difference of opinion among the Companions as to whether or not the Prophet (peace be on him) saw his Lord with his eyes, and stated that the correct opinion is that he saw Allah with his heart, not with his eyes. The one referred to in the two verses of Sūrat An-Najm, "The heart did not falsify what he saw" [verse 11], and "He has certainly seen him descending another time" [verse 13], is Gabriel, as we authentically know from the Prophet (peace be on him) himself. The Prophet (peace be on him) saw Gabriel twice in the original form in which he was created.

As for "approaching" and "coming near" mentioned in verse 8 of the same *sūrah*, "He approached and came near," they are different from the ones mentioned in the *ḥadīth* of *isra'*. 'Ā'ishah and Ibn Mas'ūd have clarified that it was Gabriel who approached and came near. The context of the verse confirms this. The verses read, "He was taught by one mighty in power, imbued with wisdom, for he appeared (in stately form) while he was in the highest part of the horizon. Then he approached and came nearer." On the other hand, the approaching and coming nearer mentioned in the *ḥadīth* of *isra'* is that of Allah. It was Allah Who approached and came near.[175] As for Sūrat An-Najm, on the other hand, it was Gabriel whom the Prophet (peace be on him) saw descending at the *sidrat al-muntaha*. He saw him once on earth and the other time near the sidrat al-muntahā.

One of the proofs that the Prophet (peace be on him) was taken in bodily form while awake is the verse, "Glory be to Allah, Who did take his servant (*'abd*) for a journey by night from the Sacred Mosque (at Makkah) to the Farthest Mosque (in Jerusalem)" [17:1]. The word *'abd* is an expression used for both the body and the spirit, in the same way that *insān* (human being) is a word that includes both the body and the spirit of a person. This is the

---

[174]The *ḥadīth* of the *Isra'* as reported by Anas Ibn Mālik through Mālik bin Ṣa'ṣa'ah has been recorded by Al-Bukhārī, 3207, 3887; Muslim, 164; An-Nasā'ī, 1:217: Aḥmad, 4:208, 210; Ibn Ḥibban, 48; and Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr*, 19:599. The text the commentator quoted is from Ibn Al-Qayyīm's *Zādal-Ma'ād* (vol. 3, p. 38) and not directly from Al-Bukhārī; and Ibn Al-Qayyīm did not quote the exact words of Al-Bukhārī.

[175]The commentator is relying on the words of Shurayk, which, as mentioned earlier, are mistaken narrations from Shurayk.

common, well-known usage of the term. That is the correct meaning (here). The *isra'*, therefore, was with both (the soul and the body). Reason cannot preclude that. If one can doubt the ascent of a human being, then one can also doubt the descent of the angels. That can also lead to the denial of prophethood which is clear infidelity (*kufr*).

One may ask what the wisdom is behind the Prophet (peace be on him) first being taken to the *Bayt al-Maqdis* (in Jerusalem). The answer is, and surely Allah knows best, that this was done in order to demonstrate that Muḥammad's prophethood was true. When the Quraysh asked the Prophet (peace be on him) to describe Jerusalem, he described it to them.[176] He also informed them about the caravan that he passed by on his trip.[177] Had he been taken directly up to the heavens from Makkah, that would not have happened. Nobody, of course, could have asked him about the description of heaven and then check the veracity of his statement. But since they were acquainted with the *Bayt al-Maqdis*, they could ask him about it.

In the *ḥadīth* of ascension there is evidence for the confirmation of Allah's transcendence about the creation, if one were to ponder it. And with Allah is guidance.

(47) *Al-Ḥawḍ* (the Fountain), which Allah will grant the Prophet (peace be upon him) as an honor to quench the thirst of his nation, is factual.

The *aḥādīth* narrated concerning the Fountain reach the level of *mutawātir*. They have been narrated from thirty some-odd Companions. Our teacher, Sheikh 'Imād ad-Dīn Ibn Kathīr, may Allah shower His blessings upon him, has collected all the channels through which the *aḥādīth* have been transmitted in his great history, *Al-Bidāyah wa an-Nihāyah*.[178]

Among those chains is what Al-Bukhārī recorded on the authority of Anas Ibn Mālik, who narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) said, "My fountain will be as wide as the distance from Aylah to San'a in Yemen. And it will contain as many jugs as the stars in the sky."[179]

---

[176]See the *ḥadīth* in Al-Bukhārī, 3886, 4710, and Muslim, 170.

[177]Aḥmad, 1:374; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*, 3:15.

[178]Ibn Kathīr, *An-Nihāyah*, Dr. Aḥmad Abū Mulhim, et al., eds. (Cairo: Dār Ar-Rayyān li at-Turāth, 1408/1988), 1:337-73.

[179]Al-Bukhārī, 6580; Muslim, *Ar-Riqāq*, 2303; At-Tirmidhī, *Ṣifat al-Qiyāmah*, 2444; Aḥmad, 3:230.

Anas also narrated that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Some of my companions will come to my Fountain. When I see them and they are presented to me, they will be detained on the way while coming to me. I will say, 'My companions!' It will be said, 'You do not know what they innovated after you.'" [recorded by Muslim].[180]

Aḥmad recorded from Anas Ibn Mālik that one time the Prophet (peace be on him) dozed off for a little while. He then raised his head and smiled. Then he either said to them or they said to him, "What has made you smile?" He said, "A *sūrah* has just been revealed to me. It says: 'In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, We have given you the Kawthar (the Fountain of Abundance)...' until the end of the *sūrah*. Then he said, "Do you know what the Kawthar is?" They said, "Allah and His Messenger know best." He said, "It is a river that Allah will give me in Paradise. It will abound in goodness. On the Day of Judgment, my followers will come to it and find there as many cups for drinking as the number of stars. Some of them, however, will be taken away. I will say, 'O Allah, they are from my nation.' Allah will say, 'You do not know what they did after you.'"[181] Muslim recorded that *ḥadīth* with the wording, "It is a river which my Lord has promised me. It will abound in goodness. It will be a fountain to which my followers will come on the Day of Judgment."[182] The rest of the *ḥadīth* is the same as the one recorded by Ahmad.

The meaning of the *ḥadīth* is that there will be two outlets from that River of Abundance to the Fountain. The Fountain will be on the Plain of Judgment facing the Bridge (*aṣ-Ṣirāṭ*) which will cause people to stagger. Some of them will not be allowed to drink from the Fountain since they had apostasized from Islam. People such as they will not be able to cross the bridge.

Al-Bukhārī and Muslim record on the authority of Jundub Ibn 'Abdullah Al-Bajalī, who heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) say, "I will precede you at the Fountain."[183] Farat, the word used in the *ḥadīth*, means the one who reaches the water first.

---

[180]Muslim, *Al-Faḍā'il*, 2304; Al-Bukhārī, 6582. Also see Al-Bukhārī, 6576, 6583; Muslim, 2290, 2297; Aḥmad, 5:333, 339, 388.

[181]Aḥmad, 3:102; Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4747; An-Nasā'ī, 2:133.

[182]Muslim, *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, 400.

[183]Al-Bukhārī, 6589; Muslim, *Al-Faḍā'il*, 2289; Aḥmad, 4:313; Al-Ḥumaydī, 779; Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr*, 1688, 1689.

Al-Bukhārī recorded from Sahl Ibn Sa'd Al-Anṣārī that the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) said, "I will precede you at the Fountain. Whoever comes to it will drink from it, and whoever drinks from it will never be thirsty again. Some people will come to me, whom I will recognize and who will recognize me, and then there will be a barrier between me and them." Abū Hāzm, one of the narrators of the *ḥadīth*, said, "An-Nu'mān Ibn Abī 'Ayyāsh heard me (while I was narrating that). He said, 'Is that how you heard it from Sahl?' I said yes. He said, 'I swear that I heard it from Abū Sa'īd Al-Khudrī, but he added the words, "They are from my nation. And it will be said, 'You do not know what they innovated after you.' I will say, 'Get away, get away to those who changed after me.'"'"[184]

What can be concluded from all the *aḥādīth* narrated about the Fountain is that it is a great and huge Fountain. Its water will come from the River of Abundance, mixed with the water of Paradise. It will be whiter than milk, colder than ice, sweeter than honey, and better smelling than musk. The Fountain will be vast and as long as it is wide. The distance between its two corners will be equal to a month-long journey. In some of the *aḥādīth* it states, "Its water will continue to increase as long as people drink from it. From the mud at its bottom will come musk. And from its pebbles will come pearls, gold bars and various kinds of jewels." Glory be to the One Who creates whatever He pleases.

Some *aḥādīth* state that every prophet has a Fountain, but the Fountain of our Prophet (peace be on him) is the greatest and sweetest of them and will give drink to the largest number of people.[185] May Allah, by His grace and generosity, include us among them.

Abū 'Abdullah Al-Qurṭubī wrote in *At-Tadhkirah*, "Opinions differ regarding the Balance and the Fountain, as to which comes first. Some say that the Balance will come first. Others say that the Fountain will come first. Abū Al-Ḥassan Al-Qabisī says that the first opinion is correct." Al-Qurṭubī also supports it according to the

---

[184]The commentator gave the meaning of the *ḥadīth* and not the exact wording found in Al-Bukhārī. See Al-Bukhārī, 7050.

[185]This *ḥadīth*, with somewhat different wording, occurs in At-Tirmidhī, *Ṣifat al-Qiyāmah*, 2445. At-Tirmidhi's chain is weak. In *Majma' az-Zawā'id* (10:363), Al-Haythamī states that Aṭ-Ṭabarānī also recorded it and except for one transmitter of the *ḥadīth*, Marwān Ibn Ja'far As-Samarī, whose reliability is disputed, the other narrators are reliable. Al-Albānī concludes that the *ḥadīth* is *ḥasan* due to some supporting evidence he found for it.

meaning. He says that people will be thirsty when they come out of their graves, so they will go to the Fountain first and then to the Balance and the Bridge. Abū Ḥāmid Al-Ghazālī, *in Kashf 'Ilm al-Ākhirah*, narrates from some of the Elders who wrote on this topic that the Fountain will come after the Bridge. But this is a mistake, says Al-Ghazālī. Al-Qurṭubī said, "That is correct. You should not think that this is going to happen in this world. It will be on a different world, that will shine like silver, where no blood will be shed, no one will be wronged, and where Allah will come down for judgment."

May Allah curse those who deny the existence of the Fountain. They will be barred, I fear, from it on the Day of Judgment.

(48) *Ash-Shifā'ah* (intercession) that has been prepared on their (the Muslims') behalf is also a fact, as has been reported in the *aḥādīth*.

Intercession is of many varieties. Some of them are agreed upon by the Muslim nation. Concerning others, the Mu'tazilah and other heretics reject them. The first type is the first intercession and the greatest, and is the exclusive privilege of our Prophet (peace be on him) from among all his brother prophets and messengers (may Allah's blessings be upon all of them). There are many *aḥādīth* recorded in Al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and other works about this intercession from a number of Companions.

From among those narrations is the narration of Abū Hurayrah, who said, "Once a lamb was brought to the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him). A leg of lamb was offered to the Prophet as that was his favorite. He took some bites from it and then said, 'I will be the leader of the people on the Day of Judgment. Do you know why? Allah will gather everyone from the earliest to the latest times on a single plain (where an observer will be able to see all of them and they will be able to hear the announcer. And the sun will come near them. They will face a situation that they cannot bear.) Some people will say, 'Don't you see the condition you are in and the state that you have reached? Will you not seek one who can intercede with your Lord?' Some people will say, 'Appeal to your father, Adam.' They will go to him and say, 'Adam, you are the father of all mankind and Allah created you with His own Hands and breathed into you a spirit from Him, and commanded the angels to bow down to you and made you live in Paradise. Will you not intercede for us with your Lord? Don't you see in what a (miserable) state we are in and what kind of situation we have reached?'

"Adam will reply, 'My Lord is so angry, as He has never been before and will never be in the future. And He forbade me the tree but I disobeyed (Him). (I am worried about my) own self. Myself! Go to somebody else. Go to Noah.' Then they will go to Noah and say, 'Noah, you were the first of the messengers of Allah to the people of the earth, and Allah named you a thankful servant. Can't you see what a terrible state we are in and what a situation we have reached?' Noah will reply, 'Today my Lord is so angry, as He has never been angry before or will ever be angry again. I have myself to worry about. Myself! Go to someone else. Go to Abraham.'

"They will then say, 'Abraham, you are the prophet of Allah and His dear friend on earth. Can't you see our condition, how miserable it is?' He will say, 'My Lord is very angry today, as He has never been angry before or will ever be angry again.' He will then recall his misstatements and say, 'I fear for myself. I fear for myself. Go to Moses.' Then they will go to Moses and say, 'You were a messenger of Allah. Allah chose you for His message and spoke especially to you. Intercede for us with your Lord. Can't you see the state we are in? Can't you see what situation we have reached?' Moses will say to them, 'My Lord is very angry today, as He has never been before nor ever will be again. I killed someone whom I was not commanded to kill. I am worried about myself, myself, myself. Go to someone else. Go to Jesus.' "Then they will say, 'Jesus, you are a messenger of Allah and His word that He bestowed on Mary and a spirit from Him – the Prophet (peace be on him) then said, 'Jesus was just this – and you spoke to people while in the cradle. Intercede for us with your Lord. Can't you see what a miserable state we are in? Can't you see what a situation we have reached?' Jesus will say, 'My Lord is angry today, as He has never been before nor will ever be again.' And he will not mention any sin (on his part, but will say:) 'Go to someone else. Go to Muḥammad (peace be on him).'

"They will go to Muḥammad and say, 'Muḥammad, you are a messenger of Allah and the last prophet. Allah has forgiven you your past and future sins. Intercede for us with your Lord. Can't you see what a miserable state we are in? Can't you see the situation we have reached?' I will then stand and go to the Throne and bow down to my Lord, the Exalted. Then Allah will teach me some words that I did not know and inspire me to praise Him in words that were not given to anyone before me. He will say, 'Muḥammad, raise your head, ask and it will be given; intercede and your intercession will be accepted.' I will say, 'O Lord, my nation, my nation. O Lord, my nation, my nation. O Lord, my nation, my

nation.' He will say, 'For those of your nation who have no reckoning to face, enter them through the right door of Paradise. Others will enter Paradise through the other doors along with the rest of your followers. The Prophet (peace be on him) then said, 'By the One in Whose hand is my soul, the distance between the two sides of the door will be like the distance between Makkah and Hajar or between Makkah and Busra." [recorded by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim; but with this particular wording it is only to be found in the *Musnad* of Ahmad].[186]

The most amazing thing is that some scholars who narrate this *ḥadīth* from more than one chain do not even mention the first intercession, in which Allah comes to decide the affairs among the people, as is mentioned in the *ḥadīth* about the Blowing of the Trumpet. But that is the point of the narration and it is what the beginning context alludes to. The people will seek intercession from Adam and the prophets after him to decide among the people. They will seek rescue from their place, as the text of the remaining narrations show. When they reach the place of gathering, that is when they will mention intercession concerning the sinners of the nation and their rescue from the Hell-fire.

It is as if the purpose of the Elders, narrating this *ḥadīth* in an abbreviated matter, was to refute the Khawārij and those who followed them from among the Mu'tazilah. Those are the people who reject the notion that anyone will be taken out of the Hell-fire after entering it. Therefore, they mention only that portion of the *ḥadīth* in which it clearly states the refutation of those people and their heresy that contradicts the *ḥadīth*.

This is explicitly mentioned in the *ḥadīth* of the Trumpet. If I did not fear that it would lengthen this work, I would include all of that *ḥadīth*. Some of the things it mentions are that they will go to Adam, then Noah, then Abraham, then Moses, then Jesus, and then come to the Messenger of Allah Muḥammad (peace be on them all). He will go and bow down under the Throne in a place called Al-Faḥṣ. Allah will say, "What is the matter?" although He is fully informed of it. The Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) will say, "O Lord, You promised me intercession, so my intercession is concerning Your creation. Judge among them." Allah, the Most High, will say, "That is your intercession. I will bring them and judge among all of you." He then will say, "Go back and wait among the people."

---

[186]Aḥmad, 2:435-436.

Then it mentions the splitting of the heavens. The angels will descend among clouds and then the Lord, Glorified and Most High, will come and decide the matter. The angels that are closest to Allah will be singing His praises in a special manner. Allah will place His footstool wherever He wishes on His earth. Then He will say, "I have been silent to you since I created you until this day, listening to your statements and watching your deeds, so be silent for me. Here are your deeds and here are your records that will be read to you. Whoever finds good should thank Allah. Whoever finds other than that should not blame anyone except himself."

Then the *ḥadīth* states, when the people of Paradise arrive at Paradise, they will say, "Who will intercede for us with our Lord to enter Paradise?" They will say, "Who has more right to that than your father, the one created by Allah's hand and into whom He breathed a spirit from Him and spoke to directly." So they will go to Adam and seek that from him. Then the Prophet (peace be on him) mentioned Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and then Muḥammad (peace be on him). Finally, the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) said, "They will come to Paradise and I will take hold of the ring of the door. Then I will seek to open the door. It will be opened for me and I will be welcomed therein. When I enter, I will see my Lord and fall prostrate. Then I will be permitted to praise Allah in a manner that was not taught to any of His creation. Then Allah will say to me, 'Get up, Muḥammad. Intercede and your intercession will be accepted. Ask and it will be given." When I raise my head, Allah will say – and He knows best: 'What is your purpose?' I will say, 'O Lord, you promised me intercession. I intercede for the people of Paradise to enter Paradise.' Allah then will say, 'I accept your intercession. And I permit them to enter Paradise...'" The imams, Ibn Jarīr, in his *Tafsīr*, Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, Abū Ya'la Al-Mawsalī, Al-Bayhaqī and others recorded this *ḥadīth*.[187]

The second and third forms of intercession concern the Prophet's intercession for those people whose good and bad deeds are equal. He will intercede on their behalf to have them enter Paradise, and he will also intercede for other people who were ordered to go to Hell but due to the intercession of the Prophet (peace be on him) they will be spared.

---

[187]This is a very lengthy *ḥadīth*. In its chain is Ismā'īl Ibn Rafī, who is weak, and Muḥammad Ibn Yazīd or Ziyād, who is unknown. In his commentary on the Qur'ān, Ibn Kathīr called this *ḥadīth* "very strange".

The fourth type of the Prophet's intercession will be for raising the ranks of those who enter Paradise above the level they deserve from their actions. The Mu'tazilah accept only this type of intercession and they reject all the other forms, although they are confirmed in *mutawātir aḥādīth.*

The fifth type of intercession refers to intercession to allow some people to enter Paradise without any reckoning. The best evidence for this type of intercession is the *ḥadīth* of 'Ukāshah Ibn Miḥsan, in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) supplicated for him to be among those seventy thousand who will enter Paradise without any reckoning. This *ḥadīth* is recorded in Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.[188]

The sixth form of intercession concerns lightening the punishments of those who deserve it, like the Prophet's interceding for his uncle Abū Ṭālib's punishment to be lightened.[189] After mentioning this type of intercession, Al-Qurṭubī stated in *At-Tadhkirah,* "One might say, 'But Allah says, "No intercession by any intercessor will protect them"' [74:48]. The response to that is that the intercession certainly will not rescue the non-believers from Hell, but it will rescue the Believers from the Fire and allow them to be admitted into Paradise."[190]

The seventh kind of intercession refers to the Prophet (peace be on him) asking permission for all the Believers to enter Paradise, as mentioned earlier. In *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* it is recorded from Anas that the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) said, "ĪI will be the first to intercede for admitting people to Paradise."[191]

The eighth form of intercession is the Prophet's intercession for the people of his nation who committed great sins and were sent to Hell. He will intercede for their release from Hell. This type of intercession has been mentioned in *aḥādīth* that reach the level of being *mutawātir.* Perhaps the Khawārij and Mu'tazilah were not aware of that fact and therefore they held a differing opinion, being ignorant of the authenticity of these *aḥādīth* and refuting those who were knowledgeable of them, thus continuing in their heresy. Actually, this type of intercession is also performed by the angels, prophets and other Believers. The Prophet (peace be on him) will be given four opportunities to exercise this type of intercession.

---

[188]Al-Bukhārī, 5811, 6542; Muslim, *Al-Īmān,* 216, 217.

[189]Al-Bukhārī, 3883; Muslim, *Ash-Shifā'ah,* 209; Al-Ḥumaydī, 460.

[190]Al-Qurṭubī, *At-Tadhkirah,* 1:249.

[191]Muslim, *Al-Īmān,* 196; Ad-Dārimī, 1:27; Aḥmad, 3:140.

From the *ḥadīth* on this topic is the *ḥadīth* of Anas Ibn Mālik who said that the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) said, "My intercession will be for the people of my nation who committed great sins" [recorded by Imām Ahmad].[192]

Al-Bukhārī recorded in the *Book of Tawḥīd* (of his *Ṣaḥīḥ*) that Sulaymān Ibn Ḥarb narrated to us that Hamad Ibn Zayd narrated to us that Ma'bad Ibn Hilāl Al-'Anazī said, "The people of Basrah gathered and went to Anas Ibn Mālik. Thābit Al-Bunānī went with us. We asked Anas about the *ḥadīth* of intercession. Anas was in his house. We decided that we would see him when he prayed the *dhuhr* (noon) prayer. We asked for his permission to enter and he gave it to us and he was sitting on his carpet. We said to Thābit, 'Do not ask him about anything else before asking him about the intercession.' (He said, 'Abū Hamzah, these people, your brothers from Basrah, have come to you to ask you about the *ḥadīth* of intercession.) He said, 'Muḥammad (peace be on him) told us:

"When it is the Day of Resurrection, people will be wandering in distress. They will go to Adam and say, 'Intercede for us with your Lord.' He will say, 'That is not for me, but you should go to Abraham, as he is the beloved friend of the Merciful.' They will go to Abraham and he will say, 'That is not for me. Go go Moses, for he is the one whom Allah spoke to directly.' So they will go to Moses and he will say, 'That is not for me to do, but you must go to Jesus; he is the spirit of Allah and His word.' They will then come to Jesus and he will say, 'That is not for me to do, but you must go to Muḥammad.' Then they will come to me and I will say, 'This is for me to do. I will ask permission from my Lord and He will give me permission. He will put in my heart some words of praise which I do not know now. I will praise Him with those words, then I will fall prostrate to Him. The call will come, "Muḥammad, raise your head. Speak and you will be heard. Intercede and your intercession will be fulfilled. Ask and it will be given."

"'Ī will say, "O Lord, my nation, my nation." It will be said, "Go, take out whoever has a grain of faith in his heart." I will then go and do so. Then I will return and praise Allah (again) with those words of praise. Then I will fall prostrate to Him. It will be said, "Muḥammad, raise your head. Speak and you will be heard. Intercede and your intercession will be fulfilled. Ask and it will be

---

[192]Aḥmad, 3:213; Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4739; At-Tirmidhī, *Ṣifat Yawm al-Qiyāmah*, 2436; Ibn Ḥibban, 2596. It is *ṣaḥīḥ*.

given." I will say, "O Lord, my nation, my nation." It will be said, "Go, take out whoever has a even a particle of faith in his heart." I will then go and do so. Then I will return and praise Allah (again) with those words of praise. Then I will fall prostrate to Him. It will be said, "Muḥammad, raise your head. Speak and you will be heard. Intercede and your intercession will be fulfilled. Ask and it will be given." I will say, "O Lord, my nation, my nation." It will be said, "Go, take out whoever has even the tiniest, tiniest amount of faith in his heart and take him out of the Hell-fire." I will go and do so.'"

'Thābit said, "When we left Anas, I said, 'We should pass by Al-Ḥassan; he has hidden himself in the house of Abū Khalīfah,[193] and tell him about what Anas just narrated to us.' We went to him and greeted him. He gave us permission to enter. We said to him, 'Abū Sa'īd, we are coming to you from Anas Ibn Mālik. We have not seen anything like what he narrated to us about the intercession.' He asked what he said. We then proceeded to narrate the *ḥadīth* to him. We came to the end of it, and he said, 'What else did he say?' We said, 'He did not add anything to that for us.' He said, 'Anas has narrated that entire *ḥadīth* to me for twenty years. I do not know if he forgot the rest of it or was afraid to tell you the rest of it lest you rely on it solely (and not work).' We said, 'Abū Sa'īd, narrate it to us.' He laughed and then said, 'Mankind has been created hasty. I only said that to you because I want to narrate it to you.'

"He (the Prophet, peace be on him) then said, 'I will return a fourth time and praise Allah (again) with those words of praise. Then I will fall prostrate to Him. It will be said: 'Muḥammad, raise your head. Speak and you will be heard. Intercede and your intercession will be fulfilled. Ask and it will be given.' 'I will say, "O Lord, give me permission concerning all of those who said, 'There is no one worthy of worship except Allah' (to take them out of Hell)." He, the Most High, will say, 'By My honor and glory, by My majesty and greatness, I will take out from the Fire whoever has said, "There is no god except Allah."''" This is the wording of the *ḥadīth* in Muslim's narration.[194]

The *ḥadīth* scholar Abū Ya'la narrated from 'Uthmān that the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) said, "Three (groups of

---

[193]He was hiding in order to evade Al-Hajāj Ibn Yūsuf Ath-Thaqafī.

[194]Al-Bukhārī, 7510; Muslim, 193, 326; Ibn Mājah, 4312; Aḥmad, 3:116, 244, 247, 248.

people) will intercede on the Day of Judgment, the prophets, then the scholars and then the martyrs."[195]

In the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, there is a *ḥadīth* from Abū Sa'īd from the Prophet (peace be on him) who said, "Allah will say, 'The angels have interceded; the prophets have interceded; the Believers have interceded. The only one left is the Most Merciful of the Merciful. He will then take a handful from the Hell-fire and will release therefrom a people who never did any good deeds..."[196]

People are divided into three opinions concerning the issue of intercession. The polytheists, the Christians, the extreme heretics who revere Ṣūfī masters to excess, and others consider intercession with Allah by those whom they consider revered in a way similar to the kind of intercession that takes place in this world. The Mu'tazilah and Khawārij reject the notion of our Prophet's or others' intercession for those who committed great sins. As for the Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah, they affirm the notion of our Prophet's intercession for the people who committed great sins, as well as the intercession of others, but no one will be allowed to intercede except with Allah's permission, and He will specify the people who will be interceded for, as is stated in authentic *aḥādīth*, such as the *ḥadīth* of intercession which says, "They will go to Adam, then Noah, then Abraham, then Moses, then Jesus, and Jesus will say to them, 'Go to Muḥammad, for he is a servant whose past and later sins were forgiven by Allah.' Then they will come to me and I shall go. When I see my Lord, I shall fall prostrate to Him. And I shall praise Him with words of praise that He shall give to me that I cannot state now. He will say, 'Muḥammad, raise your head. Speak and you will be listened to. Intercede, and your intercession will be accepted.' Then I will say, 'O my Lord, my nation.' Then He will state the people for me and I will enter them into Paradise. Then I shall go and bow down and He will state some people for me...' He mentioned that three times."[197]

As for praying to Allah in the name of the Prophet (peace be on him) or anyone else in this world, the matter needs some detail. If

---

[195]Recorded by Ibn Mājah, *Az-Zuhd*, 4313. Al-'Uqaylī mentioned the *ḥadīth* in *Kutab ad-Du'ā'fa al-Kabīr* ('Abdul-Mu'ṭī Amin Qala'jī, ed.; Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmīyyah, 1404/1984), vol. 3, p. 67. He said that one of its narrators, 'Anbasah Ibn 'Abdur-Raḥmān, is to be avoided, according to Al-Bukhārī, while Abū Ḥātim called him a forger, and the person he narrated the *ḥadīth* from is unknown. Al-Albānī concludes that this *ḥadīth* is fabricated.

[196]Part of a long *ḥadīth* in Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 183, 302; Aḥmad, 3:94.

[197]Part of the long *ḥadīth* on intercession referred to earlier.

the supplicator says, "By the right of Your prophet (upon You)" or "By the right of so-and-so" and swears by a created being to impress on Allah to answer his supplication, that act is to be avoided for two reasons. First, it is a kind of swearing by someone other than Allah. Second, it involves the belief that someone has some right over Allah. It is not allowed to swear by anyone other than Allah, and no one has any right over Allah except what He has laid down for Himself, as in Allah's saying, "It was incumbent upon Us to aid those who believed" [30:47].

Also, in the confirmed *ḥadīth* in Al-Bukhārī and Muslim when the Prophet (peace be on him) said to Mu'ādh while he was riding behind him on an animal, "Mu'ādh, do you know what is the right of Allah upon His servants?" He answered, "Allah and His Messenger know best." He said, "His right upon them is that they should worship Him and not ascribe anything as a partner to Him. Do you know what the right of the servants is upon Allah if they do such a thing?" He said, "Allah and His Messenger know best." He told him, "Their right upon Him is that He should not punish them."[198] That right is an obligation according to His perfect words and His truthful promise. Furthermore, it is not the case that the servant himself has any such right upon Allah, as one created being might have over another created being. Allah is the real benefactor of man for any good which he receives from anyone. The obligatory right that they have is due to His promise not to punish them. The fact that He will not punish them is not something one can swear by, nor may Allah be invoked in its name or on its account. In fact, nothing is a means to something except what He has made a means to it.

Similarly, a *ḥadīth* in the *Musnad* from Abū Sa'īd from the Prophet (peace be on him) reports that a man who was walking to prayer said, "I beseech You by the right of this walking of mine and by the right of those who beseech You."[199] This is the right of the beseechers that Allah has made incumbent upon Himself. It therefore behooves Him to respond to their prayer and reward their worship. A poet spoke well when he said:

---

[198]Al-Bukhārī, 2856, 5967, 26267, 6500, 7373; Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 30; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Īmān*, 2645; Ibn Mājah, *Az-Zuhd*, 4296; Aḥmad, 3:260, 261.

[199]Aḥmad, 3:21; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Masājid*, 778. Ibn As-Sunnī has said that two of the transmitters of this *ḥadīth*, Fudayl Ibn Marzūq and 'Ati'ah Al- Awfī, are weak. Hence the *ḥadīth* is weak. Ibn As-Sunnī, *'Amal al-Yawm wa al-Laylah*, 83. Also see Al-Albānī, *Silsilat al-Aḥādīth adh-Dhā'ifah wa al-Mawḍū'ah* (Beirut: Al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1392/1972), *ḥadīth* no. 24.

Men have no rights over Allah,
And nothing done for Him goes unrewarded.
If men are punished, His justice requires it;
If they are rewarded, it is simply His grace.
And His grace knows no bounds.

One may ask: What is the difference between the words "by the right of those who beseech You" and the words "by the right of Your Prophet"?[200] The answer is that the first one amounts to saying "by the right of those who beseech You whose prayers You have promised to hear and, as I am one of them, please grant my prayer." On the other hand, the phrase "By the right of so-and-so," even if he had a right over Allah on account of a promise that He had made to him, has no relation to Allah's responding to the supplication of the supplicator. It is as if he said, "Since so-and-so is one of your devoted servants, answer my prayer." What is the relationship between the two and what requires the other to be answered? This is actually an act of trespassing the limits of supplications. Allah has said, "Call on your Lord with humility and in private; for He does not like those who trespass the limits" [7:55]. The above manner of beseeching Allah is an innovation. It has never been narrated from the Prophet (peace be on him), any of his Companions, nor any of the Successors and not from any of the *imāms*; it is only found in the temples and amulets that are written by ignorant people and Ṣūfī tarīqahs.

Supplication is one of the greatest acts of worship. Worship must be founded upon the Sunnah and obedience (to said Sunnah) and not upon personal whims or innovations.

If by saying, "by the right of so-and-so" one's intention is to adjure Allah to do something in his name, that, too, is forbidden. To adjure someone other than Allah in the name of a created being is not allowed; therefore, what about adjuring the Creator in the name of a creature? The Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Whoever swears by anything other than Allah has associated (partners) with Him."[201] That it is why Abū Ḥanīfah and his two companions said that it is disliked for the supplicator to say, "I ask you by the right of so-and-so, by the right of your prophets and messengers, by the right of the Inviolable Mosque, or by the right of *al-mash'ar al-ḥarām*," and so

[200]Note that the *ḥadīth* the first phrase is based on is weak, as mentioned above. Therefore, there is no real need to respond to this question.
[201]Aḥmad, 2:34, 69, 87, 125; Abū Dāwūd, 3251; At-Tirmidhī, *An-Nudhūr*, 1535; Al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mustadrak*, 1:18. It is an authentic *ḥadīth*.

on. In fact, Abū Ḥanīfah and Muḥammad disliked for anyone to say, "O Allah, I ask you in the name of the seat of Your glory, the Throne," but Abū Yūsuf did not dislike such a statement after he had heard a narration concerning it.[202]

If a person should say, "I beseech You in the name of the status that so-and-so has with You," or "I seek a means to You through Your prophets, messengers and devoted servants," and he thinks that so-and-so has a place of honor with Allah that he should invoke Allah through him, such a statement is forbidden. Had this been the practice of the Companions during the lifetime of the Prophet (peace be on him) they would have continued doing likewise after his death. But they used to seek a means to Allah during his lifetime through the Prophet's own supplications.[203] They used to ask him to pray for them. Then they would say, "Amen" to his supplications, as was the case in *al-istisqā* (the prayer for rain) and other times. When the Prophet (peace be on him) died, 'Umar said, when they went out to make the prayer for rain, "O Allah, when we did not have rain we asked the Prophet to pray for us and You gave us rain. Now we ask you through the uncle of the Prophet."[204] Then he asked 'Abbās to pray for them and to beseech Allah. He did not adjure Allah to give rain in the name or position which 'Abbās had in Allah's sight. If that had been the case, the Companions would have done it by the Prophet's position and honor, as he definitely had a greater and more honorable position with Allah than 'Abbās.

Some say in prayer, "I ask You in the name of my obedience to Your Messenger and love for him," or "by my belief in him and the rest of Your prophets and messengers and my believing in them," and so on. This is one of the best types of supplications, means of approach and seeking intercession.

The words, "seeking approach to Allah by a certain person" are somewhat vague. Some people make mistakes based on these words because they do not understand their meanings. If you ask someone to pray and supplicate for you while he is alive, that is permissible.

---

[202]See Ad-Durr al-Mukhtār with the commentary *Radd al-Muhtar*, 6:395-397. The tradition which Abū Yūsuf seemed to have relied upon was considered by Ibn Al-Jawzī to be fabricated. See Az-Zayla'ī, *Nasb ar-Rayah* (Beirut: Al-Maktabah al-Islāmīyyah, 1393/1973), 4:272-3. Al-Albānī and Al-Arnawūṭ are in agreement with Ibn Al-Jawzī concerning this *ḥadīth*.

[203]For a discussion of this point, see Ibn Taymīyyah, *Iqtiḍā aṣ-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm* (Muḥammad Hāmid Al-Fiqī, ed.; Cairo: Maktabat as-Sunnah al-Muḥammadīyyah, 1369), pp. 398ff.

[204]Al-Bukhārī, 1010, 3710; Ibn Ḥibban, 2861; Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Kabīr*, 84.

But if you love and follow someone and he deserves to be loved and followed, and you ask him to pray and supplicate for you in the name of his being worthy of praying and supplicating or in the name of your love for him or if you swear by him, then this is improper or forbidden. Similar is the case when you pray in the name of something and take it as a means or swear by it.

An example of the first type is the story of the three young men who sought shelter in a cave. This is a well-known *ḥadīth* recorded by Al-Bukhārī, Muslim and others. A boulder fell and closed the opening to the cave upon them. They approached Allah by mentioning some good deeds they had done sincerely for His sake. Each of them said, "If You know that I did that seeking Your countenance, rescue us from the situation which we are in." Finally, the boulder was removed and they walked out of the cave.[205] These people prayed to Allah through their pious deeds, and pious deeds do contribute to the acceptance of a prayer. Allah has promised that He will grant the prayers of those who have faith in Him and do good deeds, and that He will increase His favors upon them.

In sum, intercession with Allah is not like intercession between human beings. One who intercedes with a man not only pleads for the petitioner but also joins in his prayer. There are then two who pray. He also joins the intercessor, because with his intercession he becomes a co-granter of the object that is requested. In short, he joins the petitioner as well as the petitioned. But Allah is one, without a second. No one can therefore intercede with Him without His prior permission. He is in full control of everything. No one shares with Him in anything. That it is why the chief intercessor will bow down before Allah on the Day of Judgment and praise Him. Only then will He say, "Raise your head, speak and you will be heard. Ask and you will be given. Intercede and it will be granted." Allah will determine the categories of people whom the Prophet (peace be on him) will take out of Hell and enter into Paradise. Thus, everything is in the hands of Allah, as He has said, "Say: Indeed, this affair is completely Allah's" [3:159]; "Not for you, but for Allah is the decision" [3:128]; and, "Is it not His to create and to rule" [7:54].

Although no one can intercede with Him except for one He permits and for whomsoever He wills, He has given the intercessor the honor of having his intercession accepted. The Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) said, "Intercede and you shall be rewarded

---

[205] Al-Bukhārī, 2215, 2272, 2333, 3465, 5974; Muslim, *Adh-Dhikr*, 2743; Abū Dāwūd, *Al-Buyū'*. 3387; Aḥmad, 2:116.

for it. Allah commands through the tongue of His Prophet what He wills."[206] In the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, it is recorded that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Tribe of Manāf, I cannot save you from (the punishment of) Allah. Ṣafīyyah, aunt of the Prophet of Allah, I cannot save you from Allah. 'Abbās, uncle of the Prophet of Allah, I cannot save you."[207] Another *ḥadīth* in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* records that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "I should not see any of you coming on the Day of Judgment carrying on your shoulders a camel braying or a goat bleating or a skin waving, and saying, 'Save me!' I will say, 'I have conveyed to you the message. Now I cannot do anything for you.'"[208] If the best and greatest of all the intercessors says to his dearest ones, "I cannot save you from Allah," what do you think will be the situation for everybody else?

When someone prays for anybody or intercedes for him, and Allah hears his prayer and grants his request, he did not at all effect the realization of the object prayed for in the same way it occurs in the human context. It is Allah Who has made him pray and intercede. It is He Who creates his acts. It is also He Who first inspired the sinner to repent and then He accepts his repentance. He is the One Who inspires him to do good deeds and then rewards him for them. He is the One Who inspired the person to pray and then He grants his prayer. This is based on the foundations of the beliefs of the Ahl as-Sunnah who believe in predestination and that Allah is the Creator of all things.

(49) The covenant that Allah made with Adam and his descendants is a fact.

Allah has said, "And remember the day when your Lord drew forth from the Children of Adam, from their loins, their descendants and made them testify concerning themselves, (saying:) Am I not your Lord? They said: Yes, we do testify to that. That was lest you should say on the Day of Judgment: Of this, we were unaware" [7:172]. Thus Allah has stated that He brought out the children of Adam from their loins testifying concerning themselves that Allah is their Lord and their Master and that there is no god but Allah. A

---

[206] Al-Bukhārī, 1432, 6027, 6028; Muslim, *Al-Birr wa aṣ-Ṣalāḥ*, 2627; At-Tirmidhī, 2674; Abū Dāwūd, 5131; An-Nasā'ī, 5:77-78; Aḥmad, 4:400, 409, 413; Al-Ḥumaydī, 771.

[207] Al-Bukhārī, 2753, 3527, 4771; Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 204; Aḥmad, 2:333, 350, 360, 398, 399; An-Nasā'ī, 6:248, 249, 250.

[208] Part of a long *ḥadīth* in Al-Bukhārī, 3073; Muslim, 1831; Aḥmad, 2:426.

number of *aḥādīth* also mention that the Children of Adam were brought out from his loins and "the people of the right hand" were separated from "the people of the left hand". Some of the *aḥādīth* also mention that they were made to testify that Allah is their Lord.

Among these *aḥādīth* is the *ḥadīth* recorded by Ahmad, on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās, who narrated that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Allah made a covenant with the offspring of Adam on the plane of 'Arafah. He took out from his loins all the children whose seed He had sown in him. He spread them before him and addressed them directly and said, 'Am I not your Lord?' They said, 'Yes, we testify to that.'" The Prophet (peace be on him) then recited the rest of the verse, "(This was) lest you should say on the Day of Judgment: 'Of this, we were unaware,' or lest you should say: 'Our fathers before us may have taken false gods, but we are their descendants after them. Will you then destroy us because of the deeds of men who were futile?'" [7:172-173]. This *ḥadīth* was also recorded by Al-Nasā'ī, Ibn Jarīr and Ibn Abī Ḥātim. Al-Ḥākim recorded it in *Al-Mustadrak* and said, "Its chain is authentic, but Al-Bukhārī and Muslim did not record it."[209]

Imām Aḥmad has recorded another *ḥadīth* which states that 'Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb was asked about the above-mentioned verse. He said that the Prophet (peace be on him) was asked about it and he said, "Allah created Adam, touched his back with His right hand, brought out a group of his descendants, and said, 'I have created these people for Paradise, and they will do the work of the people of Paradise.' He touched his back again and brought out another group of his descendants and said, 'I have created these for Hell, and they will do the work of the people of Hell.'" Then a man said, "Messenger of Allah, why should we do deeds then?" He answered, "When Allah, the Most High, creates a man for Paradise, He engages him in the deeds of the people of Paradise until he dies doing those deeds and enters (on that account) Paradise. But when He creates a man for Hell, He engages him in the deeds of the people of Hell until he dies doing those deeds and enters him on that account into the Fire."[210] This *ḥadīth* was also recorded by Abū

---

[209]Aḥmad, 1:272; *Tafsīr Aṭ-Ṭabarī*, 15338; Al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Asmā' wa aṣ-Ṣiffāt*, pp. 326-327; Al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mustadrak*, 2:325. See also Al-Haythamī, *Majma' az-Zawā'id*, 7:25. Al-Albānī says this *ḥadīth* is authentic.

[210]Aḥmad, 1:44-45.

Dāwūd, At-Tirmidhī, Al-Nasā'ī, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn Jarīr and by Ibn Ḥibban in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*.[211]

At-Tirmidhī has recorded another *ḥadīth* from Abū Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) said, "When Allah created Adam he touched his back, whereupon all his descendants that Allah will create until the Day of Resurrection came out of his back. He put a speck of light between the eyes of each one and presented them to Adam. 'Who are these people?' Adam asked. 'They are your children,' He replied. Adam looked at one of them whose light impressed him the most. He asked, 'Lord, who is this? He said, 'This is one of your later descendants, and his name is David.' He asked, 'What is his lifespan?' 'Sixty years,' He replied. Thereupon Adam requested, 'Lord, take forty years from my life and add them to his.' But at the time of his death, when the angel approached him, he said, 'Don't I still have forty more years?' the angel said, 'Didn't you give them to your descendant, David?'" Then the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Thus Adam refused, and his children refused after him. He forgot, and his children also forgot. He erred, and his children also erred." At-Tirmidhī said after recording this *ḥadīth*, "It is *hasanṣaḥīḥ*." Al-Ḥākim also recorded it and said, "It is authentic according to the conditions of Muslim, although neither he nor Al-Bukhārī recorded it."[212]

Imām Aḥmad also recorded another *ḥadīth* on the authority of Anas Ibn Mālik, who narrated that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "One of the people marked for Hell will be asked on the Day of Judgment, 'If you had everything that is on the earth, would you be willing to give it as ransom for your own sake? He will say, 'Yes.' Then Allah will tell him, 'I asked you for something much less than that. I made a covenant with you when you were in Adam's loins not to associate any partner with Me. But you refused and insisted on associating partners with me.'" This *ḥadīth* was also recorded by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.[213]

---

[211]Abū Dāwūd, 4703; At-Tirmidhī, 3075; An-Nasā'ī in Al-Kubra (as quoted by Al-Mizzī in *Tuhfat al-Ashraf*, 8:114); Ibn Ḥibban, 6133; *Tafsīr Aṭ-Ṭabarī*, 15357; Al-Lalkā'ī, *Sharḥ 'Aqīdat Ahl as-Sunnah*, 990; Al-Baghawī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 77. Al-Albānī stated that this *ḥadīth* is authentic due to supporting evidence, except for the statement, "He touched his back", for which he found no supporting evidence.

[212]At-Tirmidhī, At-*Tafsīr*, 3078; Ibn Ḥibban, 5134; Al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Asmā' wa aṣ-Ṣiffāt*, p. 324; Al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mustadrak*, 1:64, 2:325. According to Al-Albānī, it is *ṣaḥīḥ*.

[213]Aḥmad, 3:127, 129, 218; Al-Bukhārī, 3334, 6538, 6557; Muslim, *Al-Munafiqūn*, 2805.

In addition, there are yet other *aḥādīth* that show that Allah took Adam's descendants from his loins and that He differentiated between the people of Hell and the people of Paradise.[214]

On the basis of these *aḥādīth*, some people say that the souls are created before the bodies. But these traditions do not say that the souls continued to exist after they were first brought out. The most that they say is that their Creator and Originator shaped their souls, fixed their forms, determined their ages and deeds, and took them out from their source and then put them back. He also fixed the time that each individual soul would come into existence. They do not state that Allah created them at that time with a permanent existence and then kept them in one place, after which He will put them into their bodies, one after the other, as their time became due. Ibn Ḥazm is of the above opinion but the *aḥādīth* do not prove that. It is true that Allah, Glorified be He, created one group of people after that, according to a predetermined plan and they will appear in existence accordingly. This is also true for every one of His creatures. He has determined their measures, ages, properties and forms; then He brings them into existence according to the fixed plan.

What is narrated on this topic only refers to what has been stated above. Some of them show that Allah also brought out their semblances and images and separated the happy ones from the wretched.

As for their bearing witness, this occurs in the two statements of Ibn 'Abbās and Ibn 'Amr,[215] may Allah be pleased with them. This is why a number of people, both of the Elders and later generations, say that the covenant referred to is that Allah created the souls with knowledge of His Oneness (*tawḥīd*), as was mentioned earlier in the *ḥadīth* of Abū Hurayrah. The meaning of Allah's words, "We bear witness" is, 'Certainly we bear witness that You are our Lord.' This is the opinion of Ibn 'Abbās and Ubayy Ibn Ka'b. Ibn 'Abbās also said, "They testify against one another." Some say that, "We bear witness" is a statement of the angels. Such people stop at the word, "certainly". This is the opinion of Mujāhid, Ad-Duḥḥāk and As-Sudī. As-Sudī also stated, "This is a statement from Allah Himself and His angels that they bear witness to the children of Adam testifying to that." the first opinion is apparently more correct. The

---

[214]See As-Suyūṭī, *Ad-Durr al-Manthūr fī at-Tafsīr bi al-Ma'thūr* (Beirut: M. Amin Danj, 1314/1896), 3:141-145; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*, 2:261-264; Ibn Al-Qayyīm, *Ar-Rūḥ* (Beirut: Dār Al-Kutub Al-Islāmīyyah, 1402/19820, pp. 211-216.
[215]The *ḥadīth* of Ibn 'Abbās was mentioned earlier. For the *ḥadīth* of Ibn 'Amr, see *Tafsīr Aṭ-Ṭabarī*, 15354, 15355, 15356.

other statements are mere suppositions that do not have any evidence for them. The evident meaning of the verse supports the first opinion.

One should note that some of the commentators on the Qur'ān mention only the first statement that Allah will take the children of Adam out from his loins and they will bear witness against themselves and then they will be returned. This was the course of Ath-Tha'labī, Al-Baghawī and others. Some of them do not even mention that. They say that Allah planted in them the evidence concerning His Oneness in Lordship and Godhood and their minds and reason bear witness to what Allah has demonstrated for them. This was the approach of Az-Zamakhsharī and others. Some mention both opinions, such as Al-Wāḥidī, Ar-Rāzī, Al-Qurṭubī and others. But Ar-Rāzī ascribes the first opinion to the Ahl as-Sunnah and the second opinion to the Mu'tazilah.

Certainly the verse does not actually support the first opinion, that is that they were taken from Adam's loins. All it states is that they were taken from the loins of the Children of Adam. The mention of them being taken from Adam's loins and the evidence for it is in some *aḥādīth*. Some such *aḥādīth* mention them being taken out, and that some are decreed for Paradise and some are decreed for Hell, as in the *ḥadīth* of 'Umar. Some mention them being taken out and Adam looking at them without any mention of any kind of decree or testimonial, as in the *ḥadīth* of Abū Hurayrah. The reports that state them bearing witness – in the manner described in the first opinion above – are only those statements that come from Ibn 'Abbās and Ibn 'Amr (and not from the Prophet, peace be on him). The *ḥadīth* scholars have some doubt about those narrations. None of the compilers of *ṣaḥīḥ aḥādīth* recorded it save Al-Ḥākim in *Al-Mustadrak*, and Al-Ḥākim is well known for being lax when it comes to including non-authentic *aḥādīth* in his collection.

The *ḥadīth* that states that some are decreed to go to Paradise and some are decreed to go to Hell points to the question of predestination. This has considerable evidence for it. There is no dispute over this issue among the Ahl as-Sunnah. The heretical Qadarīyyah sect differ from them on this point.

As for the first point, there is a dispute concerning this matter between the Elders and later scholars of the Ahl as-Sunnah. If I had not decided to be brief, I would have recorded all of the *aḥādīth* concerning that matter and what is said regarding it, and the reasonable statements and verses that point to it.

Al-Qurṭubī said this verse is problematic. The scholars have discussed its interpretation. We will mention what they say in

accordance with what I have come across. Some people say that the meaning of the verse is that Allah took from the loins of the children of Adam, one from the other. (Some say) the meaning of, "And they bear witness against themselves, 'Am I not your Lord'" that by His creation, He is pointing to His Oneness because every adult person knows of necessity that he has just one Lord. ("Am I not your Lord") implies that that statement is taking the place of their testimony against themselves (and they are admitting to it). As Allah says about the heavens and the earth, "Come, both of you, willingly" [41:11]. This was the opinion of Al-Qafal and Atnab. Some say that Allah took the souls out before He created the bodies and He gave them the knowledge to understand what He was saying to them. Then Al-Qurṭubī later quoted some *aḥādīth* that were related to this matter.

The strongest evidence for the first opinion is the *ḥadīth* of Anas that is recorded in Al-Bukhārī and Muslim. That *ḥadīth* has Allah saying, "I wanted something from you which was much easier than that. I took an oath from you when you were in Adam's loins not to worship anyone with Me. But you refused and you associated partners with Me." But this *ḥadīth* was narrated through a different chain with the wording, "I asked for less than that from you and something easier but you did not do it, so go to the Hell-fire." In that narration, it does not say anything about Adam's loins. Furthermore, the first narration does not mention taking them from Adam's loins in the manner described by the people of the first opinion.

In fact, the first opinion implies two very strange things. First, it means that the people were speaking at that time, they affirmed faith, and by that the proof is established against them on the Day of Judgment. Second, (they claim) that the verse points to that opinion, but it does not for many reasons. First, the verse says, "from the children of Adam" and does not say, "from Adam". And the verse says, "from their backs" and not "from his back". And that is substitution of the part for the whole or a substitution of implication. The latter is a better interpretation. Third, the verse says, "from their descendants" and not "from his descendants". Fourth, the verse says, "and they testified against themselves" (i.e., 'He made them witnesses against themselves'). But a witness must recall what he is witnessing. It is a reference to his witness after he entered this world, as will be shown later, and does not mention any testimony before that.

Fifth, Allah mentions that the wisdom behind that testimony was to establish the proof against them so that they could not say on the

Day of Judgment, "Lo, of this we were unaware." But the proof is established against them by the messengers and the natural inclinations that Allah has created in people. As Allah says, "...messengers of good cheer and of warning, in order that mankind might have no argument against Allah after the messengers" [4:165].

Sixth, they are reminded of that so they will not be able to say, "Lo, of this we were unaware." It is well known that they are unaware of all being brought out from Adam's loins and bearing testimony at that time; none of them recall that.

Seventh, Allah says, "Or lest you should say: 'It is only that our fathers ascribed partners to Allah of old and we were their seed after them'" [7:173]. Two points of wisdom were mentioned concerning their being taken out and testifying: they could not claim to be unaware and they could not use following their fathers as an excuse. The unaware has no idea of what is going on, and the follower follows someone else in what he is doing. These two points of wisdom would be non-existent if the proof were not through the messengers and the natural inclination (*fiṭrah*).

Eighth, Allah says, "'Will you destroy us on account of what those who follow falsehood did?'" [7:173]. If they were to be punished for their arrogance and polytheism, they could say that, but Allah punishes them for refusing to follow His messengers and for denying His messengers. (If Allah were to punish them for blindly following their fathers in idolatry without establishing the proof against them through messengers, He would have destroyed them on account of the actions of those who acting falsely; or He would have destroyed them although they were unaware of the wrong that they were doing;) but Allah stated that He does not destroy a town unjustly while their people are unaware: He destroys them only after warning by sending messengers.

Ninth, Allah made everyone testify against himself that He is their Lord and Creator. And Allah uses that testimony as proof against them in numerous places in the Qur'ān. For example, Allah says, "If you ask them who created the heavens and the earth, they will say, 'Allah'" [31:25]. This is the proof that they testified to against themselves and which they are reminded of by Allah's messengers. Allah says, "Is there any doubt about Allah, the Creator of the heavens and the earth?" [19:10].

Tenth, He has made that a sign that clearly and unquestionably points to its conclusion (to the extent that none of the evidence points to anything else). This is the nature of Allah's signs. (They point to a particular and necessary conclusion based on knowledge thereof.) Allah says, "Thus We detail Our revelations, that haply they may return" [7:174]. This is based on the natural instincts and

inclinations upon which Allah has created mankind and there is no change in Allah's creation. There is no infant that was not born according to that human nature. No infant is born in accordance with any other nature. That is something that he has no control over. There will never be any change or alteration in that. We pointed out the evidence for that earlier. Allah knows best.

Ibn Atiya and others were blessed to come to this conclusion. But they dreaded differing with the apparent meaning of the *ḥadīth* that clearly states that Allah took them out (from Adam) and made them testify against themselves and then returned them. This is why Abū Manṣūr Al-Māturīdī quoted both opinions in *Sharḥ at-Ta'wīlāt* and concluded that the second opinion is stronger. He discussed it and leaned towards that opinion.

No doubt the affirmation of belief in one Lord is part of human nature. Polytheism (*shirk*), on the other hand, is something introduced and alien to its nature. Children learn polytheism from their parents. If, on the Day of Judgment, they try to plead that their fathers practiced polytheism and they merely were following them as they did in other matters such as eating, clothing and housing, it will be said to them, "You knew the truth about the Creator. You accepted that Allah is your Lord without any partners, and you testified to that against yourself." the testimony of a person against himself can only be his admitting to something. Allah says in the Qur'ān, "Believers, stand firmly for justice, as witnesses for Allah, even if against yourselves" [4:135]. This does not mean that one must say, "I testify against myself such-and-such," but it means to confess it. (On the Day of Judgment) you will be asked, "Why did you abandon that knowledge and conviction that you bore witness to against yourself for polytheism (*shirk*)? In fact, you have gone from something known and confirmed to something that you have no knowledge about in reality, following those who have no authority over you (in matters that you need not follow them) as opposed to the worldly customs – concerning those things you may not have had any knowledge that they are evil and they may have contained some benefit for you. But that is not the case with polytheism (there is no benefit to it and you know its evil). You bore witness and you had the knowledge to know that it is evil but you turned away from the truth."

The religion which a child takes from his parents is a pattern of habits and behavior meant to promote happiness in this world. A child obviously has to have someone to look after him. The people who have the most right to that is his parents. Therefore, Islamic law considers the child to be following the religion of his parents with respect to laws related to this world. Allah will not punish such

a child for that way of life – according to the strongest opinion – until he reaches the age of maturity and the proof is established against him. At that time, he must follow the religion of knowledge and reason, that is, the religion that he knows by his reasoning is the correct religion. If his parents are (in that case) rightly guided, he follows their religion, as Joseph did. Allah says, quoting him, "I followed the religion of my fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" [13:30]. Similarly, Jacob's children said to him, "We will serve your God and the God of your fathers, Abraham, Ishmael and Isaac" [2:133].

But if the parents go against the way of the messengers, the person must still follow the way of the messengers. Allah says, "We have enjoined on man kindness to parents, but if they strive to force you to join with Me (in service) anything of which you have no knowledge, obey them not" [29:8]. If a person follows his parents blindly without ascertaining the truth, and in fact discards the truth that is evident to him, he is actually following his own desires and fancies. Allah has cautioned against this in these words, "When it is said to them, 'Follow what Allah has revealed,' they say, 'No, we will follow the ways of our fathers.' What! Even though their fathers were devoid of wisdom and guidance!" [2:170]

That is actually the situation of many people who were born into Muslim families. They follow what their fathers were following with respect to beliefs and practices. If it is wrong, they are not aware of it (because they have not bothered to study the matter). He is Muslim by environment, not by choice. When he is asked in the grave, "Who is your Lord?" He will say, "Uh, uh, I don't know, I don't know. I heard the people saying something so I said the same."

The sensible person must ponder that situation. He must advise himself and stand up for Allah's sake. He must look to see which party he belongs to. And Allah is the only Guide. *Tawḥīd ar-rubūbīyyah* (the Lord's oneness) does not stand in need of (any additional) evidence; its truth is inherent in man. The closest thing a person can examine is his own life. First he was a drop of semen that proceeded from between the backbone and the ribs. It settle in a safe abode under three layers of darkness. It developed by itself, unaffected by anything the parents or anyone else might have done. Were it placed on a sheet or plate and all the doctors of the world gathered to produce a man out of it, they would not be able to do so.

It is impossible to conceive of your life in terms of nature. The elements of nature are dead and incapable of doing anything. They cannot be described as living. The dead cannot do any act or think about doing anything. If you think about how a drop of semen

passes from one state to another until it becomes a human being, you will be convinced that the Creator is one. From that, you can move one to *tawḥīd al-uluhīyyah* or that He is the only One worthy of worship. For when the mind realizes that he has a Lord Who created him, how could he possibly worship anything else? the more one thinks and ponders, the more he will be certain and firm concerning *tawḥīd.* And Allah is the Guide. There is no lord other than He, and no one worthy of worship except Him.

(50) Allah knows from eternity and knows in an instant the number of people who will go to Paradise and the number that will go to Hell. They will neither be increased or decreased (from what He knows). Similarly, He knows the acts which anyone will do.

Allah has said, "Verily, Allah knows everything" [8:75]; and "Allah is fully acquainted with all things" [33:40]. He has knowledge of everything from eternity to eternity. His knowledge is never preceded by ignorance of something. He said, "And your Lord never forgets (anything)" [19:64]. 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib narrated that once he attended a funeral with some people at Baqī al-Gharqad. The Prophet (peace be on him) came and sat down on the ground and the people sat around him. He had a stick in his hand and his eyes were fixed on the ground. He starting scratching the earth with the stick and said, "There is no breathing soul except that Allah has already written where it will go, Paradise or Hell, and whether it will be happy or miserable."

A man then said, "Messenger of Allah, should we not then rely on what has been written and abandon our deeds?" The Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) answered him, "Those who are of the happy ones will do the deeds of the happy. Those who are of the miserable ones will do the deeds of the miserable." He then said, "Work, for everyone will find it easy to do that for which he has been created. The happy ones will have the opportunity to do the deeds of the happy, and the miserable ones will have the opportunity to do the deeds of the miserable." He then recited the verses, "So Whoever gives (in charity) and fears (Allah), and (in all sincerity) testifies to the good, We will make smooth for him the way to Bliss. But Whoever is a greedy miser and thinks himself self-sufficient and denies the good, We will indeed make smooth for him the way to

misery" [92:5-10]. This *ḥadīth* was recorded by both Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.[216]

(51) Everyone is eased to what he was created for, and it is the action with which a man's life is sealed which dictates his fate. Those who are fortunate are fortunate by the decree of Allah. Likewise, those who are wretched are wretched by the decree of Allah.

The *ḥadīth* narrated by 'Alī which states, "Go on working, for everyone finds it easy to do that for which he was created," has just been mentioned. And Zuhayr recorded from Abū Az-Zubayr that Jābir Ibn 'Abdullah said: 'Suraqah Ibn Mālik Ibn Ju'shum came (to the Prophet) saying, "Messenger of Allah, explain to us our religion as if we were just now created. How are we going to work? Are we in a situation where everything has been predetermined and recorded, or are we to begin anew in the future?" He said, "No, verily, you are going to work in a situation where everything has been predetermined and recorded." He said, "Then why should we work?" Zuhayr (the subnarrator said), 'Then Abū Az-Zubayr said something that I did not understand. I asked him what he said and he answered (that the Prophet said), "Go on working, for everyone gets facilitated his opportunity (to do his deeds).'" [recorded by Muslim].[217]

Sahl Ibn Sa'īd As-Sā'adī narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) said, "A man may do the deeds that will look to the people as if they are the deeds of Paradise but he is of the inhabitants of Hell. And a man may do the deeds that will look to the people as if they are the deeds of Hell and he is from the inhabitants of Paradise"[218] [recorded by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim]. In Al-Bukhārī's recording, he has the additional words, "The deeds will be reckoned by the deeds performed when the person's life is sealed (i.e, at the time of his death)."[219]

Al-Bukhārī and Muslim also record a *ḥadīth* from 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ūd in which the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him), the

---

[216]Al-Bukhārī, 1362, 4945, 4946, 4947, etc.; Muslim, *Al-Qadr*, 2647; Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4694; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Qadr*, 2136; Aḥmad, 1:82, 129, 132, 140; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Muqaddamah*, 78; Ibn Ḥibban, 34, 35.

[217]Muslim, 2628; Aḥmad, 3:292, 293; Aṭ-Ṭayālisī, 1737; Ibn Ḥibban, 737.

[218]Part of a *ḥadīth* in Al-Bukhārī, 2898, 4202, 4207, 6493, 6607; Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 112; Aḥmad, 5:332.

[219]Al-Bukhārī, *Al-Qadr*, 6493, 6607.

most honest of people, said, "In the wombs of your mother, your creation proceeds in this way: "You stay as a drop of sperm for forty days. It then turns into congealed blood for a similar amount of time. Then it becomes a lump (fetus) and stays as such for another similar amount of time. At that moment, an angel is sent who blows into it the soul. The angel is commanded to write four things about the being: its provision, age, deeds and whether it will be saved or doomed. By the One besides Whom there is no god, some of you do the work of the people of Paradise until you are only an arm's length from Paradise, then what has been ordained in the Book overtakes you, and you begin to do the work of the people of Hell and you enter into it. And some of you go on doing the deeds of the people of Hell until you are an arm's length from Hell, then what has been ordained in the Book overtakes you, and you begin to do the deeds of the people of Paradise and enter it."[220] *Aḥādīth* and statements of the Elders are many on this topic.

Abū 'Umar Ibn 'Abdul-Barr wrote in *At-Tamhīd*, "The people who recorded these reports on this topic are many. Most of the theologians have discussed such *aḥādīth*. The Ahl as-Sunnah come together in faith and belief in these reports. They do not dispute them. And in Allah is protection and guidance."[221]

---

[220]Al-Bukhārī, 3208, 3332, 6594, 7454; Muslim, *Al-Qadr*, 2643; Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4708; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Qadr*, 2138; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Muqaddamah*, 76; Aḥmad, 1:382, 414, 40; Al-Ḥumaydī, 126.

[221]Ibn 'Abdul-Barr, *At-Tamhīd* (Muṣṭafa Ibn Aḥmad Al-'Alwī & M. 'Abdul-Kabīr, eds.; Ribāt: Al-Maṭba'ah Al-Malakīyyah), 6:12.

(52) The exact nature of Allah's decree is Allah's secret in His creation. Neither any angel near the Throne nor any sent messenger has been given any knowledge of it. To delve into it or reflect too much about it only leads to destruction and loss, and results in rebelliousness. One should take every precaution concerning such investigation, thought, and allowing of doubts to appear. Verily, Allah has withheld the knowledge of *qadr* from His creatures and He has prohibited them from seeking it. Allah says in His Book, "He is not questioned for His acts, but they are questioned" [21:23]. Therefore, if one asks, why He did that, he has rejected the command of the Book, and whoever rejects the command of the Book becomes an infidel.

Fore-ordainment (*qadr*) is a secret that Allah has not disclosed to any of His creatures. He creates and destroys, makes poor and makes rich, gives death and gives life, misleads and guides. 'Alī said, "*Qadr* is Allah's secret, so do not try to uncover it."

The differences of opinion among the people concerning fore-ordainment is something well-known. What the Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah believe is the following. Everything is according to Allah's ordainment and measure. Allah creates the actions of human beings. Allah says, "We have created all things according to a fore-ordained measure" [54:49]; and "He has created everything and formed it on a definite measure" [25:2]. Allah wills and decrees infidelity from the disbelievers. He is not pleased with it nor does He like it, but that is His Will with respect to creation (and allowing that thing), but He is not pleased with it as a way of life.

The free-willers (Qadarīyyah) and Mu'tazilah disagree with that. They claim that Allah wills faith on the part of the disbelievers but the disbelievers themselves have willed not to believe. They are forced to take that position just so they do not have to say, Allah wills disbelief from the disbelievers and then punishes them for it. They have become like one who jumps out of the frying pan into the fire; they fled from one thing and ended up in something much more evil. Their belief requires that the will of the disbeliever dominate the will of Allah because Allah had willed faith for them – according to their belief – and the disbeliever willed disbelief and the will of the disbeliever was fulfilled while Allah's was not. This is one of the worst articles of faith. It is a statement that has no evidence for it; in fact, it contradicts the evidence.

Al-Lalkā'ī recorded a *ḥadīth* of Baqīyyah from Al-Awza'ī who stated that Al-'Ala Ibn Al-Ḥajjaj narrated to them from Muḥammad

Ibn 'Ubayd Al-Makkī concerning Ibn 'Abbās, who was told that a man was coming who disbelieved in *qadr*. Ibn 'Abbās said, "Guide me to him," as Ibn 'Abbās was blind by that time. They asked him, "What will you do to him?" He said, "By the One in Whose hand is my soul, if I could catch him I would bite his nose until I bit it off. Also, if I could catch hold of his neck, I would break it, for I have heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) say, 'I can see the women of Banū Fahm going around Al-Khazraj, moving their buttocks in an idolatrous march.' This (this man's belief) is the first idolatry (*shirk*) in Islam. By the One in Whose hand is my soul, this heresy of theirs will lead one to say that Allah does not ordain good in the same way they deny that He ordains evil."[222] Ibn 'Abbās' words, "This is the first idolatry in Islam....deny that He ordains evil," is consistent with his statement, "*Qadr* rounds out the belief in *tawḥīd*. Whoever believes Allah is one and then denies *qadr* has contradicted his *tawḥīd*."[223]

'Umar Ibn Al-Haytham said: "We went out on a vessel. With us was a Qadarī (free-willer) and a Magian. The Qadarī said to the Magian, 'Accept Islam.' the Magian said, 'When Allah wants it.' the Qadarī said, 'Allah wants it but Satan does not want it.' the Magian said, 'Allah wants something and Satan wants something and the result is what Satan wants; then Satan is stronger.'" In another narration, he said, "Then I am with the stronger of the two."

A Bedouin stopped at a meeting that included 'Amr Ibn 'Ubayd among them. The Bedouin said, "You people, my camel has been stolen, so ask Allah to return it to me." 'Amr Ibn 'Ubayd said, "O Allah, You did not will that the camel of this man be stolen, so I beg you to return it to the man." Then the Bedouin said, "I have no need of your supplication." He said, "Why not?" He answered, "Allah did not will it to be stolen and it was stolen. I am afraid that if He wills it to be returned it will not be returned."

A man asked Abū 'Iṣām Al-Qastalānī,[224] "If Allah forbids me guidance and leaves me astray and then He punishes me, will He be

---

[222]Al-Lalkā'ī, *Sharḥ Uṣūl I'tiqād Ahl as-Sunnah*, 4:625. One of the transmitters of the *ḥadīth*, Al-'Ala Ibn Al-Ḥajjaj, is weak and unreliable, hence the *ḥadīth* is weak.

[223]This narration is also weak, both as a statement of the Prophet (peace be on him) and as a statement of Ibn 'Abbās, as Al-Albānī pointed out in his footnotes to the commentary.

[224]Abū 'Isam Al-Qastalānī's history could not be traced. The words attributed to him here actually form part of a dialogue between the Mu'tazilī theologian, 'Abdul-Jabbār Al-Hamadānī (d. 415/1024) and the Ash'arī theologian, Abū Isḥāq Al-Isfara'inī. See Al-Lalkā'ī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 6:104.

doing justice?" Abū 'Iṣām said, "If guidance is something that He owns, He may give it to whom He likes and withhold it from whomever He wills."

As for proofs from the Qur'ān and Sunnah concerning fore-ordainment, they include the following:

"If We had so willed, We could certainly have brought every soul its true guidance. But the word from Me will come true. I will fill Hell with jinns and men all together" [32:13].

"If it had been your Lord's will, they would still have believed – all who are on the earth. Will you then compel mankind, against their will, to believe?" [10:99].

"But you will not will except as Allah wills, the Cherisher of the Worlds" [81:29].

"But you will not will except as Allah wills, for Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom" [76:30].

"Whom God wills, He leaves to wander; and whom He wills, He places on the Way that is correct" [6:39].

"Those whom Allah (in His plan) wills to guide, He opens their heart to Islam; those whom He wills to leave astray He makes their breast close and constricted as if he were engaged in sheer ascent in the sky" [6:125].

The cause of error is the equation of *mashī'ah* and *irādah* (determinative and executive will) with *riḍā* and *maḥabbah* (approving and loving will). Both the determinists (Jabarīyyah) and the free-willers (Qadarīyyah) make this equation. They are in agreement on this point but thereafter they differ. The determinists say that the entire world moves as it is ordained and willed by Allah; therefore, He approves of all of it and loves all of it. The free-willers, who deny fore-ordainment, say that since sin is not loved and approved by Allah, it is neither willed nor ordained by Him. It is outside of His determination (*mashī'ah*) and creation (*khalq*).

But the Qur'ān, Sunnah and sound human nature clearly distinguish between determinative will (*mashi'ah*) and loving will (*maḥabbah*).[225] As for the texts from the Qur'ān concerning deterministic and executive will, some of them have already been quoted. The texts concerning approving and loving will include Allah's statement, "Allah does not love mischief" [2:205]; "He does not approve of ingratitude from His servants" [39:7]. After prohibiting polytheism, wrongdoing, adultery and pride, Allah says,

[225]For a discussion of this distinction, see Ibn Taymīyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, 8:475-480, or Ibn Al-Qayyīm, *Maḍārij as-Sālikīn*, 1:253-254.

"The evil of such things is hateful in the sight of your Lord" [17:38].

In the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, it is recorded that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Allah dislikes you to engage in three things: useless conversation, too much questioning and wasting wealth."[226] In the *Musnad* (of Ahmad) there is a *ḥadīth* that says, "Allah loves you to act upon the concessions He has made, just as He dislikes you to do what He has forbidden."[227]

In his prayers, the Prophet (peace be on him) used to say, "O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and I seek refuge in your forgiveness from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You."[228] Consider how the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to seek refuge in the attribute of pleasure from the attribute of anger, and from the action of forgiveness from the action of punishment. The first is for an attribute and the second for the consequences of an attribute. Then he tied them all together with His essence. All of those return to Him, the One, and not to anyone else. He is in fact saying: What I seek refuge from happens by Your decree and will, and what I seek refuge in is Your pleasure and forgiveness, that also depend on Your decree and will. If You like to be kind to Your servant, You may forgive Him. If You will to be angry with him, You may punish him. Save me, therefore, from what I do not like and guard me against it. This will also be by Your will. Hence, the desirable and the undesirable both are by Your decree and will. Thus I seek refuge in You from You, in Your power, might and mercy, from what Your power, might, justice and wisdom will do. I am not seeking refuge in anyone else from anyone else, nor am I seeking refuge in You from anything caused by anyone else. It is all caused by You.

See what truths regarding Allah's unity and man's servitude are contained in these words. No one will know them except those who know Allah and know what it means to be His servant.[229]

One may ask: How is it that Allah decrees something yet He does not like it or approve of it? How can He will and create something and, at the same time, dislike and hate it? This question

---

[226]Al-Bukhārī, 1477, 2408, 2975, 6473, 7292; Muslim, *Al-'Aqḍīyyah*, 1593; Aḥmad, 4:246, 249, 250, 251, 255.

[227]Aḥmad, 2:108; Ibn Ḥibban, 2742, 3568.

[228]Discussed earlier.

[229]For more on this point, see Ibn Al-Qayyīm, *Maḍārij as-Sālikīn*, 1:254-255, and *Shifā al-'Alīl* (Riyadh: Maktabat Ar-Riyāḍ Al-Ḥadithah, 1323 A.H.), pp. 272-273.

has divided the people into different sects and groups with each group's methodology and opinion being clearly divided.

Know that will is of two kinds: one which is willed because and for itself, and the other which is willed because and for something else. The thing that is willed for itself is sought and loved for itself and for what it brings about of good. It is willed as a type of will for it as a goal and end. As for the thing which is willed because and for something else, it itself is not the goal of what is willed; it has no real benefit to it from itself, but is a means to the actual goal and will. Therefore, it is disliked by the willer from the point of view of its existence in itself; but what it leads to is the thing that is actually willed. Therefore, two aspects are combined in one: dislike for it and willing it to be. There is no contradiction or conflict here, since they are related to other things. It is similar to medicine which is disliked though the one who takes it knows that it contains his cure. Another example is the amputation of a diseased organ which is necessary to save the life of a patient; or a person who undertakes an arduous journey because he will reach a desired and liked goal. People often do things that they do not like in the hope that they will produce desired results, even if the results are only probable and they cannot be certain about them.

But what about the One Who has nothing hidden from Him? Allah may dislike something, but this does not counter His willing that thing for another purpose as it will be a cause for something that is beloved to Him. For example, Allah created Iblīs. He is the being of wickedness in ways of life, actions, beliefs and volitions. He is the cause of many human beings' unhappiness and for their actions that are displeasing to Allah. He is the deliverer of the acts that are in opposition to what Allah loves and is pleased with. At that same time, though, he is a means for many things that Allah will love to bestow on His creatures. Therefore, his existence is more beloved to Allah than his non-existence. This is true for many reasons, including (the following):

(By creating Iblīs) Allah demonstrates to His servants His ability to create opposites and contraries. He has created a being who is the most wicked and the cause of every wickedness. Yet, at the same time, He created his opposite, the angel Gabriel. Gabriel is one of the most noble of all creatures and a source of every good. Blessed be the Creator of the latter and the former. Similarly, this power of Allah's is demonstrated in His creation of night and day, disease and cure, life and death, right and wrong, good and evil. This is part of the detailed evidence of His perfect power, absolute authority, dominion and rule, for He has created those opposites. They are set up against one another. He has used them for meeting His goals. If

the world were devoid of these opposites, we would not have witnessed the faultless wisdom, the absolute power and the perfect rule He has over all things.

Second, Iblīs enables the manifestation of such names (and attributes) of Allah as the Dominant, the Avenger, the Just, the One Who chastises, Who is strict in punishment, Who is quick to judge, Whose grip is strong, Who brings low, and Who humiliates. These names and actions are all part of perfection. Their objects, therefore, have to exist. If the jinns and humans were similar in nature to the angels, none of these names would have become manifest.

Third, Iblīs makes possible the manifestation of such names of Allah as show that He forbears, forgives, overlooks and forgoes the violations of His rights, and sets sinners free. If He had not created things which He detests but which makes possible the manifestation of these names, these benefits and wisdom would have been lost. The Prophet (peace be upon him) referred to this point when he said, "If you do not sin, Allah will remove you and put in your place a people who will sin and then ask Him to forgive them, that He may forgive them."[230]

Fourth, Iblīs makes possible the manifestation of the wisdom and knowledge of the One Who is wise and knowing, Who places things in their proper places, and nothing in the wrong place, as is dictated by His wisdom and knowledge. He knows to whom He should give His message. He knows who are fit for it and who will receive it gratefully and who are not fit for it. If undesirable causes were removed because they produced evil consequences, the good things that outweigh these evils would have never been realized. Look at the sun, the moon and the wind. They produce good as well as evil but their good greatly outweighs their evil.

Fifth, if Iblīs had not been created, a number of things by which men affirm their servitude to Allah would not have occurred. The act of worship in *jihād* is one of the most beloved acts of worship to Allah. If all people were Believers, that act of worship would be nullified as well as its consequences of having loyalty and enmity for the sake of Allah. Similarly, the worship in the acts of commanding good and eradicating evil, in having patience, in going against one's desires, in sacrificing out of love for Allah, in repentance and asking forgiveness, in seeking refuge in Allah from being overtaken by his enemy, and being protected from the evil one's plots, and so on, are all part of the wisdom that the human

---

[230]Muslim, *At-Tawbah*, 2749; At-Tirmidhī, *Ad-Da'wāt*, 2526; Aḥmad, 2:305, 309. See also Muslim, 2748; At-Tirmidhī, 3539; Aḥmad, 5:414.

mind would not have been able to discover (if it had not been for the creation of Iblīs).

Someone might ask if it would be possible to achieve those good things without that cause. This question itself is invalid. It supposes that one can have an outcome without a cause, a consequence without having an antecedent. It is like hypothesizing a son without a father, movement without a moving object, repentance without one to repent, and so on.

One may ask if those things that one must have in order to produce these good things are desirable for that reason or are undesirable and evil in every respect. This question is responded to in two ways. First, from the point of view of Allah, should Allah love these acts because they are conducive to other things He holds dear, even though He dislikes them in themselves? And, second, from the point of view of the human being, is it permissible for him to be pleased with those things on that account? These are basically two different questions.

The first thing to note is that evil is always traced to non-existence, that is, the non-existence of good. The factors that lead to evil are evil on this account. But as for their simply existing, they have nothing evil in them. For example, evil souls as existing beings are good but they become evil by losing any goodness in them. They have been created as moving beings. When they are given knowledge or inspiration for the good, they move to the good. But when they are not given it, they move by themselves in the opposite direction. Movement, from the standpoint of being simply movement, is good. It can become evil in a relative sense or in relation to something else but not simply from the point of view that it is movement. All evil is wrongdoing, which means placing a thing in a wrong place. If it were put in its proper place, it will not be evil. This means that its evil character is something relative.

This is why punishments that are properly meted out are good in and of themselves, although they are evil with respect to the person being punished due to the pain that it inflicts that goes against the natural disposition for pleasure. That is, pain is evil with respect to him. But the act is good with respect to the one inflicted upon when it is meted out properly. Allah never created anything one hundred percent evil without any good aspects to it. His wisdom prevented that. It is inconceivable for Allah to desire something that is evil in all its aspects that has no benefit whatsoever in its creation. All good is in His hands and no evil proceeds from Him. In fact, everything that comes from Him is good. Evil occurs because of its lack of being related or attributed to Him. If it had proceeded from Him, it

would not have been evil. Thus the severance of this relation with Allah makes a thing evil.

One may argue that all relations have not been severed; evil is still something that has been fore-ordained and created. This is true, but in this respect the thing is not evil. Certainly its existence is attributed to Allah, but from that point of view it is not evil. It is evil because He has not made it good or conducive to anything good. This deprivation of goodness is not a "thing" that one may ascribe to Allah, Who has every good in His hands.

If further explanation is desired, note that the causes of good are three: creation, preparation (*i'dād*) and promotion (*imdād*). To create something is good, and that is for Allah only. Similarly, preparing something (for something else) and promoting it is also good. When there is no preparation or promotion, evil comes about. Their absence is not something attributed to Allah; He just does the opposite.

If one asks why Allah did not promote and strengthen the thing (with goodness) when He created it, the response is that His wisdom did not require it. It required only its creation. Its creation is good; evil enters into it because it has not been promoted and strengthened. One may then ask: Why is it that Allah did not promote everything He created? This question is invalid. It assumes that the wise course is to put all existing things on the same level. This is wrong. On the contrary, wisdom requires disparity between things, as is apparent in this world. Disparity, it should be clear, does not arise from the creation of different varieties of things; rather, it arises from the absence of certain things that are not the object of creation. As for creation itself, there is not disparity in it.[231] If you still cannot understand this point, then act upon the words of the poet:[232]

"If you cannot do a thing,
Leave it, and do what you can."

One may ask: How is it that Allah likes His servants to do something but does not help them do it? the reply is that His help may sometimes cause the loss of something more dear to Him than that particular act He likes His servant to do; or that act may produce some evil that He dislikes more than He likes that act to be performed. Allah points to that in His saying, "If they had intended to come out, they would certainly have made some preparation

---

[231]For a discussion of this point, see Ibn Al-Qayyīm, *Maḍārij as-Sālikīn*, 2:200ff.

[232]This is a line from an ode by the poet and warrior, Ma'dikarab Az-Zubaydī, famous for his chivalry before his Islam as well as after it.

thereof. But Allah was averse to their being sent forth. So He made them lag behind" [9:46]. Allah states that He disliked their going off to *jihād* with the Prophet (peace be on him), which is an act of obedience. And when He disliked that act from them He made them lag behind. Then Allah mentions some of the evils that would have resulted had they gone with the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him). Allah says, "If they had gone forth with you, they would not have added to your strength, but only made for disorder, and gone to and fro in your midst sowing sedition among you. And there are some among you who would have listened to them" [9:47]. Thus the evil that would have resulted was greater than the potential good from their going forth. Hence, His wisdom and mercy required that He make them lag behind. This example can be used as a basis upon which other cases may be judged.

Now comes the second aspect, that concerning human beings. These possibilities are not only conceivable in his case but also realities. Human beings hate evil and sinful acts committed by men, chosen, willed and executed by them. On the other hand, human beings accept them, resign themselves to them, as they happen according to how Allah has known them, written, willed and created them. We are pleased with whatever is from Allah but dislike what is from men. This is the path of those with real knowledge. Other people denounce evil without any qualification. However, their view does not differ from the view of the former group since, when they condemn evil without any qualification, they do not have Allah's will and pre-determination in mind.

The essence of the matter is that the part of evil which comes from Allah is not undesirable, but what comes from man is undesirable. If anyone says that nothing comes from man, the response is that this is the fallacious determinism from which few people have been rescued. It has been comparatively easier to save the Free-Willers from their quagmire. The way of the Ahl as-Sunnah, which is between that of the Free-Willers and determinists, is the one that happily escapes the predicament of the other two groups.

One may ask: How is it possible for one to repent when one knows that actions have been fore-ordained, willed and created by Allah, and they occur for their own reasons? This poses a problem only for those who cannot see things in their proper perspective. He is the one who considers evil a virtue since it involves compliance with the determinative will of Allah and who thinks that even though

he has disobeyed Allah's command, he has obeyed His will. A poet[233] has said concerning this matter:

"I am to repent for what He chooses for me;
Is not all that I do in compliance with His will?"

Such people are of the most blind and most ignorant of Allah and His commands and creative will. They are unaware that obedience is compliance with the religious command of Allah and to His prescriptive will, and not concurrence with His fore-ordainment or creative Will. If concurrence with the creative will of Allah were an act of obedience to Him, Iblīs would have been the most obedient of Allah, as well as the people of Noah, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Lot and Shu'ayb, and even the followers of Pharaoh would have been the most obedient servants.[234] This is truly ignorance.

However, when one realizes his inability and finds that things occur according to the will of Allah, that one depends upon Him absolutely and that one needs His protection all the time; then one is working for Allah and not for himself. Under those circumstances, he will never commit a sin. He will be under the protection of the One Who has said of such a man, "He hears by Me, sees by Me, strikes by Me, and walks by Me."[235] One cannot imagine that a man in such a state could disobey Allah. When this state passes away and he is aware of himself only, his desires overcome him and he falls pray to various enemies. But as the mist of natural existence vanishes, he feels ashamed for his acts, repents and returns to Allah. For, in the state of sin, his carnal self had the upper hand and he had forgotten the Lord. Naturally, when that state passes away, he enters into a different state, into an existence for his Lord and not for himself.[236]

---

[233]This line has been attributed to the famous poet, Muḥammad Ibn Sawār Ibn Isrā'īl Ibn Al-Khidr Ash-Shaybānī (d. 677/1278). See Ibn Taymīyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, 8:257; About the poet's life, see Adh-Dhahabī, *Al-'Ibar fī Khabar man Ghabar* (Kuwait: Dār Al-Matbū'at wa An-Nashr, 1383/1963), 5:316.

[234]See the discussion on this point by Ibn Taymīyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, 8:257.

[235]The *ḥadīth* expressing this meaning is the one which Al-Bukhārī recorded (6502): the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Allah the Almighty has said, 'Whosoever shows enmity to a friend of Mine, I will be at war with him. My servant does not draw near to Me with anything more loved by Me than the duties I have imposed on him, and My servant continues to draw near to Me with supererogatory deeds until I love him. When I love him, I become his ears with which he hears, his eyes with which he sees, his hands with which he strikes, and his foot with which he walks. Were he to ask (something) of Me, I would surely give it to him. And were he to ask Me for refuge, I would surely grant that to him.'"

[236]For a discussion of this point, see Ibn Al-Qayyīm, *Madārij as-Sālikīn*, 2:193-204.

Again, one might argue, since disbelief is ordained and determined by Allah, and we are commanded to be pleased with whatever Allah ordains, how can we reject and dislike it? First, we are not commanded to be pleased with everything Allah has ordained or commanded. There is no evidence for that in the Qur'ān or Sunnah. There are things ordained that are to be accepted and there are things ordained that are to be detested and denounced, just as Allah does not approve of some of things that He ordains. In fact, some of the things that He ordains He actually detests. Similarly, we are to hate, detest and condemn certain things.

Second, there are two aspects involved here. The first is the decree of Allah, which is an act associated with the essence of Allah. The second is the object that has been decreed, and this is something other than and separate from Allah. As far as the decree itself is concerned, it is always good, wise and just. We accept and are pleased with all of it. The object that is decreed is also of two kinds, one which we should accept and welcome, and the other, which we should not accept or be pleased with.

Third, the decree itself also has two aspects to it. The first is its connection and attribution to Allah. From this point of view, one must be pleased with it. The second aspect has to do with its relation and connection to the human being. From this point of view, it may be either something to be pleased with or something not to be pleased with. Consider the case, for example, of murder. One aspect of it is that it has been ordained by Allah, written and willed by Him, and made the end of the life of that man. As such, we accept it and resign ourselves to it. The second aspect is that it has been committed by a killer who decided to kill the man, carried out the killing, and violated the command of Allah. As such, we denounce it and are not pleased with it.

The author stated, "*Ta'ammuq* into the problem of fore-ordainment (*qadr*) is to court the displeasure of Allah." *Ta'ammuq* means to exaggerate in search of something, that is, to exaggerate in trying to discover the secrets of *qadr* and to engage deeply in discussion of it may lead to the displeasure of Allah and the loss of His favors. Hence, one should avoid delving into it and entering into controversies.

He then stated, "One should take every precaution concerning such investigation, thought and allowing of doubts to appear."

Abū Hurayrah reported that some of the Companions came to the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) and told him, "We sometimes get ideas that are too obnoxious to mention." the Prophet (peace be on him), "Do you really get them?" They said, "Yes." He then said, "That is a clear sign of faith." Muslim recorded this

ḥadīth.[237] the words, "a clear sign of faith" refer to the feeling which the Companions had regarding their ideas, the feeling that they disliked them and did not want to state them.

Muslim also recorded from 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ūd that the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) was asked about the whisperings of Satan. He said, "They are the unmistakable proofs of faith."[238] This *ḥadīth* implies the same meaning as the above *ḥadīth* from Abū Hurayrah. When one experiences evil whisperings and insinuations and tries to suppress them, one is fighting with Satan, and that is certainly a sign of faith.

This was the way of the Companions and their righteous Successors. After them came people who voiced their ideas and ventilated their doubts and filled tomes. Not only did they blacken pages but they blackened hearts. They set their false ideas against the truth and tried to suppress the truth. This is the reason the author has so strongly condemned the discussion of *qadr*. 'Ā'ishah narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) said, "The person most hateful to Allah is the one who engages in controversy and violent disputation."[239] Aḥmad recorded a *ḥadīth* saying that Abū Mu'āwīyah narrated to us, saying that Dāwūd Ibn Abī Hind narrated to us, on the authority of 'Amr Ibn Shu'ayb from his father, on the authority of his grandfather, who said, "One day the Prophet (peace be on him) passed by a group of people who were discussing fore-ordainment (*qadr*). His face turned red with anger as if a pomegranate had exploded. He said, 'What has happened to you that you are setting one verse of Allah's book against another! Those who engaged in such things before you were destroyed.'" the narrator stated that never before did he so much hate to be with a group as the one the Prophet (peace be on him) addressed that day. Ibn Mājah also recorded it.[240]

Allah has said, "They had their enjoyment of their portion (*bi-khalāqihim*), and you have of yours, as did those before you; and you indulge in idle talk as they did" [9:69]. The word *khalāq* means 'portion', as Allah says, "And they will have no portion in the

---

[237]Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 132; Abū Dāwūd, *Al-Adab*, 5111; Aḥmad, 2:397, 441, 456; Ibn Ḥibban, 145, 146, 148.

[238]Muslim, *Al-Īmān*, 133; Ibn Ḥibban, 149; Al-Baghawī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 59; Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī, *Mushkil al-Āthār* (Hyderabad, 1331; reprint- Beirut: Dār Ṣādir), 2:251.

[239]Discussed earlier. It was recorded by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

[240]Ibn Mājah, 85; Aḥmad, 2:178, 181, 185, 195; Al-Lalkā'ī, *Sharḥ Uṣūl I'tiqād Ahl as-Sunnah*, 1118, 1119; 'Abdur-Razzāq, *Al-Muṣannaf*, 20367. According to Al-Albānī it is *ṣaḥīḥ*.

Hereafter" [2:200]. That is, you enjoyed your portion in this world as the people before you enjoyed their portion; and you engage in idle talk in the same fashion they did.

Allah has thus associated enjoyment of one's portion with indulgence in idle talk. This is because corruption in religion occurs either in action or in belief. The former is caused by evil desires, and the latter is caused by doubt. Al-Bukhārī recorded from Abū Hurayrah that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "My community will follow in the footsteps of earlier communities, step by step, and do everything they did, small or big." the people asked, "Do you mean the Persians and the Romans?" He said, "Are there people other than these?"[241] 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) said, "My people will follow in the footsteps of the children of Israel. If they had intercourse with their mothers openly, some of my people would also do that. If they divided into seventy-two sects, my people will divide into seventy-three sects, all of which will go to Hell except one sect." They asked, "Who is (that one) group, Messenger of Allah?" He answered, "The sect that follows the way I and my Companions are treading" [recorded by At-Tirmidhi].[242]

Abū Hurayrah reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) said, "The Jews divided into seventy-one or seventy-two groups and the Christians did so also. My people will be divided into seventy-three groups." Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Mājah, and also by At-Tirmidhī, who said it is *hasan ṣaḥīḥ*.[243]

Mu'āwīyah Ibn Abī Sufyān narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) said, "The People of the Two Books divided their religion into seventy-two schisms. This nation will divide into seventy-three schisms – following desires – all of them in the Hell-fire except one, and that is the *jamā'ah* ('community')."[244]

The most controversial issue, and the issue that caused the most differences of opinion, is that of *qadr*. Discussion on this topic has reached its extreme limit.

The author stated, "If someone asks, "Why did He do that?" he has rejected the command of the Book. And whoever rejects the

---

[241] Al-Bukhārī, 7319, also 3456, 7320; Muslim, 2669; Ibn Mājah, 3994; Aḥmad, 2:450; Ibn Ḥibban, 6668.

[242] At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Īmān*, 2641. It is *ḥasan*.

[243] Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4596; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Īmān*, 2642; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Fitan*, 3991; Ibn Ḥibban, 2614; Al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mustadrak*, 1:128. It is *ḥasan*.

[244] Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4597; Ad-Dārimī, *Sunan*, 2:241; Aḥmad, 4:102; Al-Lalkā'ī, *Sharḥ Uṣūl I'tiqād Ahl as-Sunnah*, 150. It is *ḥasan*.

command of the Book becomes an infidel." This statement is true because the edifice of servitude to Allah and faith in Allah, His books and His messengers rests upon complete submission to Him without questioning the wisdom of His laws, His commands and His prohibitions. Allah has nowhere mentioned a community that believed in its prophet and in his message and then demanded reasons for the laws he enacted or the things he enjoined upon them or prohibited them. If they had done that, they would not have been true Believers in His prophet. On the contrary, whatever community He has mentioned had submitted to its prophet and believed in whatever he said. If it knew the reasons for His commands that was so much the better; but if it could not know them, it never deferred its compliance with the commands until it knew the reasoning behind them; it did not concern itself with that matter. The place of its prophet was greater and more respected in its sight (so it did not have to) ask him such questions. It is recorded in the Gospel (that Jesus said), "Children of Israel, ask not why God has commanded, but ask what He has commanded." That was the custom of the Elders of this community, those who were most knowledgeable and intelligent. They never asked the Prophet, "Why did Allah command this? Why did He forbid this? Why did He decree this? Why did He do that?" They knew that that was the antithesis of their faith and submission. The structure of Islamic life is built on unqualified surrender and submission.

The first step on this road is to testify that what the Prophet (peace be on him) commands is true, then to resolve firmly to obey it, then to begin doing it without delay, and remove the obstacles along the road, then to exert oneself fully and perform it in the best possible way, and finally, to do it just for the sake of obeying the command, not hesitating to fulfill it until you know the wisdom behind it such that you do the act only if you know the wisdom behind it and otherwise you do not do it. This behavior negates submission and blemishes obedience.

Al-Qurṭubī quoted Ibn 'Abdul-Barr who said, "If anyone asks for reasons in order to increase his knowledge, remove his ignorance or gain insight into the religion, there is no harm in that; the cure for ignorance is in asking. But whoever asks in a spirit of defiance and not for the sake of learning or gaining insight, that is forbidden, no matter how little or much he should ask."

Ibn Al-'Arabī said, "The scholar must gather together all the bits of evidence, look into various approaches, gather the information necessary for reaching a judgment, and formulate the argument properly. If a problem arises and it is attacked in the correct way, Allah opens the door to the correct answer."

The Prophet said, "Of the best Islamic behavior is a man avoiding the things that do not concern him" [recorded by At-Tirmidhī and others].[245]

There is no doubt that whoever rejects a command of the Book must be considered a disbeliever. But those who interpret any command of the Book due to some conception that they have must have the correct approach explained to them so they will be able to follow it. Allah is not questioned about His actions simply because He has absolute powers and authority, as Jahm and his followers believe, but because His actions have good reasons for them and are required by His mercy and justice.

We will return to this point later when commenting upon the author's words, "We do not call anyone an infidel for committing a sin unless he makes that act lawful."[246]

(53) This is all that people with enlightened hearts need to know, people who are devoted servants of Allah, and constitutes the degree of those firmly grounded in knowledge. Verily, knowledge is of two types: one existent (or accessible) in creation and one inaccessible in creation. To deny the knowledge that is existent is infidelity; to claim the knowledge that is inaccessible is also infidelity. Faith is not confirmed until a person accepts the knowledge that is existent and abandons seeking the knowledge which is inaccessible.

The word "this" in the author's words above refers to what the author discussed earlier, that is, the truths which the Shari'ah has expounded and which should be believed and practiced. In his statement, "and constitutes the degree of those firmly grounded in knowledge," knowledge means knowledge of what the Prophet (peace be on him) taught, the general principles as well as the details, the affirmations as well as the negations. What is meant by "non-accessible knowledge" is the knowledge concerning fore-ordainment that Allah has withheld from His creatures. And what is meant by the "existent (or accessible) knowledge" is the knowledge of the Shari'ah, the principles of faith as well as the rules of practice. Whoever rejects anything the Messenger presented is one of the disbelievers. Whoever claims to possess knowledge of the

---

[245]At-Tirmidhī, *Az-Zuhd*, 2318; Ibn Mājah, *Al-Fitan*, 3976; Al-Baghawī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 4132.

[246]See Section 67 of the author's text.

Unseen is one of the disbelievers. Allah has stated, "He knows the Unseen, and does not acquaint anyone with His mysteries (*ghaybihi*) except a messenger whom He chooses" [72:26-27]; and, "Verily the knowledge of the Hour is with Allah (alone). It is He Who sends down rain, and He Who knows what is in the wombs. No one knows what it is that he will earn on the morrow; nor does anyone know in what land he is to die. Verily with Allah is full knowledge, and He is acquainted with all things" [31:34].

If the wisdom of Allah is hidden from us and is not known to us, that does not mean that no purpose or reason underlies the creation or action. Do you not see that the wisdom behind Allah's creation of snakes, scorpions, mice and insects is unknown to us? All we know about these things is that they are harmful. But this does not mean that Allah did not create them or that there is no purpose in Allah's creating them, for ignorance of a matter is not proof of its non-existence.

(54) We believe in the Pen, the Tablet and all that is written on it.

Allah has said, "Nay, this is a glorious Qur'ān (inscribed) in a Preserved Tablet" [85:21-22]. Abū Al-Qāsim Aṭ-Ṭabarānī recorded a *ḥadīth* narrated by his chain of transmitters back to the Prophet (peace be on him), who said, "Allah created a Preserved Tablet out of white pearls with pages made of red rubies. Its pen is of light. Its writing is of light. Allah turns to it three hundred sixty times a day. (Its width is as much as the distance between the sky and the earth.) He creates and sustains, causes life and death, honors people and vilifies people, and does what He wills."[247]

This is the Preserved Tablet, wherein Allah wrote the measures of created beings. And this is the Pen that Allah created and wrote with in the Preserved Tablet. In *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* it is recorded from 'Ubādah Ibn Aṣ-Ṣāmit that the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) said, "The first thing that Allah created was the Pen. He said to it, 'Write.' It said, 'O Lord, what shall I write?' He

[247]At-Ṭabarānī recorded this *ḥadīth* in *Al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr*, 12511. Two of its transmitters, Zayad Ibn 'Abdullah Al-Buka'ī and Al-Layth Ibn Abī Sālim, are weak. Hence the *ḥadīth* is weak. Aṭ-Ṭabarānī also recorded this *ḥadīth* through a different chain (hadīth no. 10605) but, according to that narration, it is a saying of the companion Ibn 'Abbās. (See Al-Haythamī, *Majmū' az-Zawā'id*, 7:191.)

answered, 'Write the measure of everything until the Hour (of Judgment) occurs.'"[248]

Scholars differ as to whether the Pen or the Throne was the first of the created things. There are two opinions, as noted by Al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū Al-'Alā Al-Hamadhānī. The stronger opinion is that the Throne was created before the Pen, based on what is confirmed in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* from 'Abdullah Ibn 'Amr, who narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "Allah created the measures of all things fifty thousand years before the creation of the heavens and the earth while His Throne was on the waters."[249] This *ḥadīth* shows that the measures were fixed after the creation of the Throne.

As for the *ḥadīth* of 'Ubādah, the statement, "The first thing Allah created was the Pen..." is either one or two sentences. If it is only one – which is the correct view – its meaning is, "When He first created the Pen, He said, 'Write.'" This is stated in one narration, "When Allah first created the Pen He said, 'Write.'" If it is two sentences, where both "First" and "the Pen" are in the nominative case, it must be understood to mean that it was the first thing created of this creation. In this case, the two *aḥādīth* will be in agreement, as the *ḥadīth* of 'Abdullah Ibn 'Amr states clearly that the Throne preceded the measurements – an event that coincided with the creation of the Pen. In another version of the *ḥadīth*, the words are, "When Allah created the Pen, He said to it, 'Write.'"

The Pen referred to in these *ḥadīth* is the first, best and most glorious Pen. Many commentators on the Qur'ān are of the opinion that it is the Pen by which Allah swears in the verse, "*Nūn*. By the Pen, and by what they write" [68:1-2].[250] the second pen is the pen with which the revelations that are sent to prophets and messengers are written. Those who write with this pen are the governors of this world. All pens are in the service of their pens. During the Ascension (*isra'*), the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) heard the movement of these pens,[251] which record the things that Allah reveals He will do concerning this world above and the lower world.

---

[248]Abū Dāwūd, *As-Sunnah*, 4700; At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Qadr*, 2155, *At-Tafsīr*, 2319; Aḥmad, 5:317. This *ḥadīth* is *ṣaḥīḥ* according to Al-Albānī and Al-Arnawūṭ.

[249]This *ḥadīth* was discussed earlier. It is recorded by Aḥmad and others and is authentic.

[250]See Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*, 4:401.

[251]Al-Bukhārī, 349, 1636, 3342; Muslim, 163.

(55) If all creation gathered together to prevent something that Allah has decreed will occur, they would not be able to prevent it. And if they all gathered together to have something done that Allah has decreed will not occur, they would not be able to do it. The Pen has finished writing whatever will occur until the Last Day.

Earlier was presented the *ḥadīth* of Jābir from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) in which Surāqah Ibn Mālik Ibn Ju'shum said, "Messenger of Allah, teach our religion to us as if we were just now created. What are we going to do? Are we going to do what the pens have already written and what has been ordained, or will we be doing something new?" the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "No, you will be doing what the Pens have written and what has already been ordained."[252]

Ibn 'Abbās stated that one day he was riding behind the Prophet when he turned to him and said, "Son, I want to teach you some words. Remember Allah and He will remember you. Remember Him and you will find Him with you. Ask of Him whenever you want to ask, and pray for His help whenever you need help. Know that if the whole world combines to do you any good, they will not be able to do it unless Allah has decreed it for you. And if they all combine to cause you harm, they will not be able to do anything except what Allah has ordained for you. The pens have been lifted and the pages have dried" [recorded by At-Tirmidhī, who called it *hasan ṣaḥīḥ*.][253]

In recordings of this *ḥadīth* other than that of At-Tirmidhī, it states, "Remember Allah and you will find Him in front of you. Know Allah during times of ease and He will know you during times of hardship. Know that what missed you was not to come to you, and what afflicted you was not to miss you. Know that help comes with patience. Know also that relief comes with suffering. And know that along with hardship comes ease."[254]

---

[252]Recorded by Muslim, discussed earlier.

[253]At-Tirmidhī, *Ṣiffat al-Qiyāmah*, 2516; also see Aḥmad, 1:293, 303, 307. It is *ṣaḥīḥ*.

[254]An-Nawawī has mentioned this wording in his *Arba'īn* (text with English translation by Ezzeddīn Ibrāhīm and Denys Johnson-Davies, Damascus: The Holy Qur'ān Publishing House, 1976, pp. 69-71). Ibn Rajab said this *ḥadīth* was recorded by 'Abd Ibn Ḥumayd in his *Musnad* with a weak chain. (*Jami' 'Ulūm wa al-Ḥikam*, p. 174). Aḥmad also recorded a longer version of this *ḥadīth* (*Musnad*, 1:307) with three

The word pen in the above *aḥādīth* has been used in the plural. This shows that there are pens to write the measures of things that are different from the first Pen mentioned earlier along with the Preserved Tablet. In fact, the *aḥādīth* show that there are four types of pens and these are different from what was described earlier. The first Pen is for writing the measures of all created things. This is the Pen that was mentioned in connection with the Preserved Tablet. The second pen was created with Adam. This pen is for recording the measures of mankind. The Qur'ān refers to it when it states that Allah wrote the acts of human beings, their provisions, ages and destinies right after He had created their father Adam. The third pen is referred to in many authentic *aḥādīth* which state that after conception an angel is sent to the fetus in the womb of the mother to blow the soul into it. He is then asked to record its provisions, lifespan, deeds and whether it will be saved or doomed. The fourth pen is referred to in verses and *aḥādīth* that state that when a person reaches the age of maturity, two honorable angels are appointed to record his actions.[255]

Once it is known that everything proceeds from Allah, it is a necessary conclusion that one must fear and revere only Him. Allah says, "Therefore, fear not men, but fear Me" [5:47]; "Fear Me and Me alone" [2:41]; "It is such as obey Allah and His Messenger, and fear Allah and do right that will win in the end" [24:52]; and, "He is the Lord of Righteousness (*taqwā*) and the Lord of Forgiveness" [75:56]. There are many other similar verses in the Qur'ān. It is plain that everyone fears something, since he does not live alone. Even a king whose commands are not disobeyed has to ward off things that may harm his people. Therefore, everyone has to fear and be wary of something. If he does not have fear of the Creator, he has fear of the created. Since the likes and dislikes of people differ, one may like what another hates. He will not be able to satisfy everyone. Ash-Shāfi'ī said, "You cannot succeed in pleasing everybody." Hence, the proper course is to do what is right and avoid all evils. Do not, though, try to please people. This is not

---

chains, but only of them is unbroken, the third being unbroken and authentic.

[255]In the Qur'ān it states, "But verily over you (are appointed angels) to protect you, kind and honorable, writing down (your deeds). They know all that you do" [82:10-12]. There is a *ḥadīth* reported by 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib and 'Ā'ishah that states, "The Pen will not write the deeds of three persons: children until they reach the age of maturity, people asleep until they awake, and the insane until they regain sanity." [See Aḥmad, 1:116, 118, 140, 158 and 6:100, 101, 144].

possible nor are you required to do it. But pleasing Allah is both possible and required.

Furthermore, the created cannot be independent of Allah. If a person fears his Lord, he will not have to look to people for assistance. 'Ā'ishah wrote to Mu'āwīyah - some have narrated this as a statement of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and others as a statement of 'Ā'ishah – "Whoever displeases people to please Allah, Allah will be pleased with him and endear him to people; and whoever pleases the people by displeasing Allah, those who praised him first will end up abusing him."[256] Hence, if a person pleases Allah, He will relieve him from needing people's help and love and eventually He will cause them to be pleased with him. Truly, ultimate happiness is for those who fear Allah and act righteously. Allah will love him and the people will love him, as is confirmed in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* from the Prophet, who said, "When Allah loves someone He calls Gabriel and says, 'ī love so-and-so and you, too, must love him.' Thereafter Gabriel loves him and announces in the heavens, 'Allah loves so-and-so, so all of you love him, too.' Then the inhabitants of the heavens love him. Finally, he is loved by all on earth."[257] the Prophet (peace be upon him) also said the opposite about those whom Allah dislikes.

It is clear that no one is free of fear; one fears either the Creator or some of the created. However, when one fears the created, one loses more than one gains, for obvious reasons. But the fear of Allah is what secures happiness in both this world and the next. He is the Lord of Righteousness (*taqwā*) and the Lord of Forgiveness. He is the One Who forgives sins. None of the creations can forgive sins and none of them can save anyone from His punishment. He alone can offer protection and there is no protection in anyone other than Him. Some of the Elders will say, "The God-fearing person is never in need because Allah has said, 'For those who fear Allah, He prepares a way out and provides for them from sources they could never imagine [65:2-3]." He has thus guaranteed a way out which no one else can guarantee. Furthermore, He will determine a provision for them they that will not have conceived. If this does not occur, it means there is some shortcoming in the person's piety and

---

[256]At-Tirmidhī, *Az-Zuhd*, 2414; Al-Baghawī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 4213; Ibn Ḥibban, 276, 277; Al-Ḥumaydī, *Musnad*, 266; Al-Quda'ī, *Musnad ash-Shahab*, 499, 500, 501. According to Al-Albānī, the *ḥadīth* is authentic both as a statement of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and as a statement of 'Ā'ishah.

[257]Al-Bukhārī, 3209, 6040, 7485; Muslim, *Al-Birr wa aṣ-Ṣalāḥ*, 2637; At-Tirmidhī, *At-Tafsīr*, 3160; *Al-Muwaṭṭa*, 2:953; Aḥmad, 2:267, 341, 413, 509, 514.

God-consciousness. He must seek Allah's forgiveness and repent to him. Then Allah says in the verse, "If anyone puts his trust in Allah, sufficient is Allah for him" [65:3]. Allah will take care of him and he will never be in need of anyone else.

Some people think that trust repudiates earning one's livelihood or seeking necessary means. If the thing has already been determined, there is no need to look for means and sources. This belief is wrong. The means to earning a livelihood are sometimes obligatory, sometimes praiseworthy, sometimes permissible, sometimes undesirable and sometimes forbidden, as has been explained in the relevant works. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) was the best of anyone when it came to relying upon Allah. But he used to wear wargear for the battle. He also used to walk in the marketplaces to earn a livelihood, to the extent that the disbelievers said, "What sort of a messenger is this who eats food and walks through the marketplaces?" [25:7]. Many of those who believe that earning and seeking means of livelihood are incompatible with trusting in Allah actually live off what other people give them, either of charity or gifts, including the gifts of tax collectors, police officers and the like. This is discussed in the relevant works. This is not the place to discuss that in detail. In particular, one may look at the commentary on the verse, "Allah blots out or confirms what He pleases, with Him is the Mother of the Book" [13:39].

Concerning the verse, "Every day He is engaged in some work" [55:29], Al-Baghawī quoted Muqātil's observation that this verse was revealed to counter the Jewish belief that Allah does not do anything on the Sabbath.[258] the commentators state that among the things He is engaged in are giving life and death, sustaining, honoring a people, humiliating another people, healing the sick, freeing captives, relieving the problems of the distressed, responding to supplications, giving to one who asks, forgiving sins, and numerous other deeds that cannot all be mentioned here, that He does for His creation whenever He wills.[259]

---

[258]Ibn Al-Jawzī, *Ẓād al-Maṣīr*, 8:114; Al-Baghawī, *Ma'ālim at-Tanzil*, printed on the margin of *Tafsīr al-Khāzin* (Beirut: Dār Al-Fikr), 4:270.

[259]See Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*, 4:273.